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Embassies under siege as Kurds orchestrate Europe-wide protest

ENRAGED KURDISH protesters were occupying a dozen Greek and Kenyan missions in London and elsewhere across Europe last night, after Turkey captured and brought home from Nairobi the fugitive Kurdish guerrilla leader Abdullah Ocalan.

Last night more than 80 Kurds had stormed and taken control of the Greek embassy in London's Holland Park, as hundreds maintained a tense stand-off with the police outside. A 15-year-old girl set fire to her hair and was taken to hospital with burns.

Necia Kanpeper, 15, was saved by police who managed to use their jackets to put out the flames. Kurds inside the embassy told *The Independent* by telephone that if the police tried to force the situation, they would commit suicide. "All of us are ready to die," one said.

In Ankara, Bulent Ecevit, the Prime Minister, told his countrymen that Mr Ocalan, wanted as a traitor and a terrorist for his part in a 14-year civil war which has taken 29,000 lives, had been brought back from Kenya and was behind bars. "We promised the state would capture him wherever he went, and we have kept our promise," he said.

But even before Mr Ecevit made his announcement, Kurdish exiles had started a precisely orchestrated pre-dawn occupation of embassies and consulates, after Greece had announced that Mr Ocalan, who could face the death penalty in Turkey, was in Kenyan hands. The order seems to have been issued by the high command of Mr Ocalan's Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK). Some 23 European countries were caught up in the protest. Several had refused to allow his plane to land on 1 February as the Kurdish leader, expelled from Italy, sought sanctuary. By evening, missions in France, Russia and elsewhere had been evacuated, either voluntarily or by force. But in Britain, Austria, the Netherlands and Switzerland, tension was rising.

In the Hague about 150 Kurds stormed the Greek embassy residence, taking hostage the ambassador's wife, his eight-year-old son and a Filipino servant. In Zurich, demonstrators stormed into the Greek

By JUSTIN HUGGLER in Istanbul.
PAUL WOOD in Athens
and ANDREW BUNCOMBE

consulate, taking hostage two people.

Yesterday's events will have an impact on the allied war of attrition against President Saddam Hussein, on ever fraught relations between Greece and Turkey, on Ankara's ties with the European Union, and on the struggle of 20 million Kurds spread among Turkey, Iran, Iraq and Syria to forge an independent country.

Mystery surrounds the circumstances of Mr Ocalan's recapture. According to the Greek Foreign Minister, Theodoros Pangalos, the Kurdish leader had flown to Kenya on a private plane on 2 February after a refuelling stop on the Greek island of Corfu. There he stayed incognito at a Greek embassy building until Monday when he left of his own accord and went with the Kenyan authorities to the airport expecting to fly to the Netherlands. Instead he found himself on a plane for Turkey, where he arrived at 3am yesterday.

But the Kenyans said they had nothing to do with the incident, while one of Mr Ocalan's lawyers said he was dragged out. In Washington, a spokesman for the Clinton administration, which is desperate to retain Turkey's backing for its pressure on Saddam Hussein, said the US had no "direct involvement".

Diplomats in Athens painted a picture of a Greek operation to take charge of Mr Ocalan's future, which had gone badly wrong, with Athens being fooled into handing the PKK leader into the arms of his captors. That line held for a few hours until the Turks announced they had Mr Ocalan. Mr Pangalos was forced to admit the PKK leader was being escorted to the airport in Nairobi by Greek officials when his car "disappeared" down a side street. Mr Pangalos warned that if the violence did not cease, "serious measures" would be taken against the PKK.

The president of the Kurdish parliament in exile, Yasser Kaya issued an appeal for the action to stop, but to no effect.

Wave of attacks, Page 3



Necia Kanpeper, aged 15, who set herself on fire outside the Greek embassy in London

Richard Lewis



THE MAIN FLASHPOINTS

The Hague: 150 Kurds storm Greek ambassador's residence, taking family hostage

Zurich: Demonstrators force way into Greek consulate, taking two hostages

Paris: Police eject protesters (above) from Kenyan embassy and Greek consulate

Strasbourg: Police fire teargas at 30 protesters inside Greek consulate

Marseille: Dozens of protesters forced out of Greek consulate

Bonn: Hostages held in Kenyan and Greek embassies

Leipzig: Three held in Greek consulate

Stuttgart: 27 arrested after storming Greek embassy. Woman sets herself on fire

Frankfurt: 50 protesters occupy consulate

Hamburg: Protesters gather in front of Greek and British consulates

Cologne: More than 30 arrested trying to occupy the Greek consulate

Dusseldorf: Demonstrators attack Greek consulate

Hanover: About 15 protesters occupy the Greek consulate and throw missiles at police

Moscow: Demonstrators occupying Greek embassy give themselves up to police

London: A woman sets herself alight as about 80 Kurdish demonstrators occupying the Greek embassy

Brussels: About 50 protesters occupy Greek embassy and douse themselves with petrol

Vienna: Greek and Kenyan embassies stormed

Geneva: More than 20 demonstrators enter a UN building

Berlin: Demonstrators force way into Greek embassy

Copenhagen: Woman sets herself on fire at the Greek embassy. 48 protesters held

Stockholm: 50 pro-Kurdish demonstrators arrested after scuffles at Greek embassy

Oslo: 20 Kurds force their way into Greek consulate

Yerevan: Kurdish protesters occupy UN office in Armenian capital

Sainsbury had official GM food role

LORD SAINSBURY has attended government meetings relating to genetically modified food despite his financial interest in the issue. *The Independent* has learnt.

The Science minister looked increasingly embattled last night after claiming earlier that he had stood aside from discussions on the issue.

Lord Sainsbury of Turville, whose supermarket shareholding is in a trust, has taken a leading role in a government consultation to which GM food and crops are central. The only food industry figure on an advisory committee for the exercise is from Sainsbury's.

The consultation will ask how the public views genetically

By FRAN ABRAMS
Westminster Correspondent

modified crops, genetic testing and cloning. In December, Lord Sainsbury chaired a conference on it attended by groups including Greenpeace and Friends of the Earth. Earlier this month he took part in a debate on the exercise in a cabinet sub-committee on biotechnology.

John Redwood, the Conservative trade and industry spokesman, said Lord Sainsbury should resign. "He has a lot of explaining to do. A minister either has to sell all his shares or avoid contact with issues related to them. When is this minister going to obey the rules?" he said.

Yesterday, Lord Sainsbury said there was no conflict of interest. "I have not taken part in any government decisions or discussions relating to GM food policy," he said.

Later, his department issued a clarification, saying Lord Sainsbury took part in discussions that did not involve policy-making. The only recent policy-making discussion on GM food had taken place at the February cabinet committee meeting and the minister had left, a spokesman said.

"There is a very clear difference between actually making decisions and discussing policy matters, and having a general discussion," he said. The Prime Minister, Tony



Blair, attacked the Tories for "hypocrisy and opportunism". He added: "There is no conflict of interest whatsoever... the honing of Lord Sainsbury is unpleasant and wrong."

Norman Baker, the Liberal Democrat spokesman on GM foods, also attacked the Tories.

"The real issues are the impact on the environment and the food chain. Until a few weeks ago the Tories thought GM stood for 'General Motors'," he said.

Lord Sainsbury announced his public consultation on biotechnology on 15 December, though a similar exercise had begun under his predecessor, John Birt. Its advisory committee included Alison Austin, from Sainsbury's, as well as scientists and a biotechnology company, though the DTI said she had been appointed by Mr Birt.

The exercise would explore the implications of progress in the biosciences, Lord Sainsbury's press release said. "Our long-term aim is to build public

confidence in the Government's use of scientific information and know-how," he said.

In addition to his supermarket interests, Lord Sainsbury gave financial backing to two biotechnology companies, Diatex and Innotech Investments. Yesterday he denied a report that he owned the patent for the cauliflower mosaic virus, the gene at the centre of the current food row, but said he did own another GM patent on a product called a translocator enhancer. All the interests had been placed in his blind trust.

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IN THE INDEPENDENT TOMORROW

I made my brother a promise on his deathbed.
Now I don't know if I can keep it

VIRGINIA IRONSIDE'S DILEMMAS

THE BEST WRITING, WEEK IN, WEEK OUT: DEBORAH ROSS, HOWARD FAY OBSON, HAMISH McRAE, MARK STELL, ROBERT FISK, TERENCE BLACKER, SUZANNAH FRANKEL, JOHN WALSH, RICHARD WILLIAMS, DAVID AARONOVITCH, DEBORAH ORR, THOMAS SCOTCHIFFE, MILES KINGTON, SUF ARNOLD, ANDREAS WHITMAN SMITH

FILM
ANTHONY QUINN ON
'AFFLICTION'

PLUS LAW AND
EDUCATION

Trimble fights off rebellion as vote is split

DAVID TRIMBLE, the Ulster Unionist leader, successfully held his party together yesterday as the Northern Ireland assembly finally accepted a report on the future shape of government of the province.

Only one of his 30 backbenchers voted against the motion, which was passed by the large majority of 77 votes to 29. The scene is now set for a showdown on the issue of arms decommissioning, which must be settled before the new administration comes into being.

Among Unionist assembly members the vote was split exactly evenly, at 29-29. While this clearly does not represent a comfortable lead for Mr Trimble, most of his supporters viewed the outcome as at least a relief and at most a victory of sort.

A second backbencher, Roy Beggs Jr, had vacillated on his voting intentions but in the end took the party line. In doing so he apparently shrugged off the influence of his father, who is an MP and a strong opponent of the Good Friday Agreement. Mr Beggs Jr said that while he had reservations, he had received concrete assurances on the decommissioning issue from Mr Trimble. He added:

BY DAVID MCKITTRICK
Ireland Correspondent

"Public opinion across the British Isles is solid on this issue. Unreconstructed terrorists cannot sit in a democratic government."

After the vote the Northern Ireland Secretary, Mo Mowlam, is technically in the position of being able to announce the formation of a new executive. In political terms, however, this must await a new measure of agreement on the decommissioning issue.

This view was endorsed yesterday by the Taoiseach, Bertie Ahern, in the latest of his sometimes confusing statements on decommissioning. He told the Dail in Dublin: "The political reality is that we cannot get to the position of setting up an executive - which we desperately need to do, and we are getting to a situation that is getting more desperate every day - without finding a compromise."

The even 29-29 split among unionist assembly members denied the Rev Ian Paisley the chance to argue that Mr Trimble's stance was supported by only a minority within unionism. Although the result brought

no loss of moral authority for the Ulster Unionist leader, it is plain enough that he kept his supporters on board by assuring them yet again that he could secure actual decommissioning from the IRA, or alternatively could form a new executive without Sinn Féin.

The republican refusal to decommission, on the other hand, remains as implacable as ever, which means a tough period of negotiation lies ahead.

Gerry Adams said last night the transfer of powers to the Assembly would lead to a breakthrough over IRA arms decommissioning. The Sinn Féin president was speaking after a meeting at Downing Street with Tony Blair to keep up the momentum towards the 10 March deadline for transferring powers to the Assembly. Mr Adams rejected the Unionist demands for decommissioning before sitting in the executive. He said that the transfer of powers would be the key to resolving the impasse.

"My view is that if the two governments keep to the agreement and the parties keep to the agreement, while it will be difficult, this issue can be resolved," he said.



The Sinn Féin president, Gerry Adams, holding a grenade pin used in an attack on a Catholic pub in Co Armagh 10 days ago, after he met Tony Blair in 10 Downing Street yesterday. Michael Stephens/PA

Baked potatoes ward off cancer

BY JEREMY LAURANCE
Health Editor

INTERNATIONAL MEDICAL experts rallied to the cause of the baked potato as one of the most effective defences against cancer. They were challenging a US study that suggested dietary fibre, found in abundance in potatoes with skins and in other vegetables, failed to protect against bowel cancer.

Gordon McVie, director general of the Cancer Research Campaign, said yesterday the study of 89,000 nurses in the *New England Journal of Medicine* last month was not representative of the general population. "The *New England Journal* paper does not change the message. A high-fibre, low-fat diet protects against bowel cancer."

The study contradicted the accepted wisdom of the benefits of fibre. The US researchers said cancer was as common in women, regardless of how much fibre they ate.

But Professor McVie reviewed the research on fibre and cancer, and said the overwhelming evidence supports the benefits of a high-fibre diet, which can also reduce the risk of heart disease, high blood pressure and non-insulin-dependent diabetes.

Of the 29 studies on fibre and cancer, most showed it had a protective effect. The latest research, in the *European Journal of Cancer Prevention*, was further proof of the benefits of fibre, he added. Professor McVie said more research was needed but the recommended intake of 18 to 20 grams of fibre, or five portions of fruit and vegetables a day, still stands.

Ten slices of wholemeal bread, 18 bananas, four baked potatoes or 64 wholemeal crackers contain the suggested daily allowance of fibre but Professor McVie suggested a variety of fibre-rich foods to keep cancer at bay.

'Save duty free' campaign dealt blow by EU report

THE EUROPEAN Commission will deliver a blow today to the campaign to save duty-free sales by disputing claims from the European Union's biggest members that abolition will cause massive job losses.

Drafts of a report, prepared by commission officials, conclude that an extension to duty-

BY COLIN BROWN
AND STEPHEN CASTLE

free sales would produce "both economic and legal obstacles" and would be a "disproportionate answer to the identified problem".

Ferry companies have warned hundreds of jobs could

be lost and fares would rise if they lose their unique trading advantage of duty-free sales.

The campaign to save duty-free sales was taken up by the Deputy Prime Minister, John Prescott. It was supported by Germany and France but Brussels commissioners are today expected to reject extension

after a review by officials and a report by Mario Monti, the commissioner for the internal market.

It could bring an end to duty-free sales from 1 July. A senior commission source said Britain would need unanimous backing to overturn the earlier commission decision to stop duty-

free sales, and that was unlikely. Denmark is believed to be holding out against pressure from the campaigners, and Belgium is also among those classed as "doubtful".

Mr Prescott said last night that Britain attached "the highest political importance" to getting a better deal for duty free.

"We must look carefully at this new report from Commissioner Monti but it does not offer an extension of duty free it does not go far enough. We are looking both for a significant extension to the current arrangements and urgent work to develop a better successor regime," he said.

The decision will be a blow for Tony Blair, who wrote to European leaders urging them to support the campaign. The supporters warned that unless ferry companies were allowed to continue making profits from duty-free trade, they may have to raise prices by at least 10 per cent. Air fares could also be affected.

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BRITAIN TODAY

KEY: 14 Temperature, °C
Wind speed, mph and direction

Lighting up: 5.34pm to 7.40am
5.34pm to 7.18am
5.34pm to 7.18am
5.34pm to 7.35am
5.34pm to 7.10am
5.34pm to 7.22am
5.34pm to 7.23am

HIGH TIDES: AM HT PM HT
Aberdeen 7.57 13.6 8.18 13.6
Cardiff 6.15 4.4 6.33 4.2
Dover 11.40 6.6 12.00 4.2
Dun Laoghaire 5.00 5.4 6.23 5.2
Greenwich 1.09 3.2 1.30 3.5
Hull 7.04 6.7 7.10 7.4
Liverpool 11.59 9.7 12.16 9.7
London 6.56 7.1 7.16 7.0
Manchester 8.07 7.1 8.07 7.0
Plymouth 8.00 2.1 8.28 2.0
Portsmouth 11.58 4.7 12.07 4.7
Preston 8.47 5.0 9.07 5.0
Scarborough 4.48 5.6 4.55 5.9
Wick 12.01 3.7 12.01 3.7

FORECAST: General situation Southern and eastern England will start chilly with sunny breaks and showers. Towards midday rain will arrive in Wales and western England, with snow over northern hills. Cloud will then spread east bringing rain and sleet to the rest of England by evening. Scotland will start frosty but frosty sunny with snow showers in the north-east. Rain, sleet and snow will reach the west later. Northern Ireland will have rain, possibly preceded by sleet, before turning much milder.

SE England, London, E Anglia, E & NE England: Cold with sunny spells and showers. Rain and sleet later. A fresh north-westerly wind. Max temp 9-10°C (43-48°F).
West England, Midlands, Channel Is: Rain later this afternoon with sleet on the hills at first. A moderate to fresh west to north-westerly wind. Max temp 7-10°C (45-50°F).
SW England, Wales, NW & Cent N England, Lake Dist, Isle of Man: Rain from midday onwards, preceded by snow over northern hills. A light to moderate west to north-westerly wind. Max temp 6-9°C (43-48°F).
Ireland: Early sleet and hill-snow turning to rain, the rain becoming heavier this afternoon but it will turn mild. A light to moderate west to north-westerly wind. Max temp 6-9°C (43-48°F).
SE Scotland, Edinburgh: Sunny but frosty this morning. Cloud increasing this afternoon. A fresh north-westerly wind. Max temp 3-6°C (37-43°F).
NE Scotland, Aberdeen, N Ireland: Very cold and frosty with sunny spells and heavy snow showers. A strong to moderate force north-westerly wind. Max temp 0-3°C (32-37°F).

OUTLOOK: It will turn much milder later tonight leaving tomorrow very mild but mostly cloudy with some drizzle and hill-fog. The north will be wet and windy on Friday. It will then turn colder and hill-fog. Southern Britain will stay mild but windy with rain towards evening.

TRAVEL: London: A12 Green Man Roundabout. Leytonstone. Major roadworks on new M11 link road. Until 21st December. Canterbury: A10 between Foston and M11. Resurfacing and bridge maintenance work at Shepperton Hill. Until 14th February. Bristol: M5 J18-19. Major roadworks on Avonmouth Bridge. Until 23rd June 2001. Birmingham: M42 between J10 Tamworth services and J6 Sutton Coldfield. Touchdowns and contrailwork. Until 23rd April. Greater Manchester: A57, Narrow lanes. Manchester-bound, due to Victorian construction work. Until 28th February.

South Yorkshire: M1 Between J34 Threlkirk Viaduct (A6108) & J34 Tinsley Viaduct (A6173). Sheffield. Canterbury roadwork to 2 lanes southbound. Until 21st November 2003. Gloucestershire: A40 Lansdown Rd, Cheltenham. Closed due to roadworks. Diversion in place. Until 1st June. Suffolk: A14 Folkstone Drive, Rowley. A4 Roadwork. Call 0336 401777 for the latest local and regional traffic news. Source: The Automobile Association. Calls charged at 50p per min (inc VAT).

SUN & MOON: Sun rises: 07.12
Sun sets: 07.19
Moon rises: 07.54
Moon sets: 18.56
First quarter: Feb 23

WEATHERLINE: For the latest forecasts call 0891 5000 followed by the two digits for your area. Source: The Met. Office. Calls charged at 50p per min (inc VAT).

RAIN OR SHINE... HUNDREDS of communities cut off by blizzards in Hungary last week now face a threat from serious flooding as temperatures start to rise. The last of the villages was reached yesterday. Officials in Budapest said that the snow on the Alps and eastern Carpathians that surround the country could melt soon. Thousands of soldiers worked round the clock to get to more than 200 towns and villages that were cut off.

YESTERDAY

EXTREMES: Warmest: Worthing 11C (52F)
Coldest: (day) Lerwick 0C (32F)
Wettest: Lerwick 0.53 in
Sinnest: Great Yarmouth 7.0 hrs
For 24hrs to 2pm Tuesday

THE WORLD: Europe noon today. Key: 10-10°C, 11-10°C, 21-30°C, 31-40°C, 41-50°C, 51-60°C, 61-70°C, 71-80°C, 81-90°C, 91-100°C, 101-110°C, 111-120°C, 121-130°C, 131-140°C, 141-150°C, 151-160°C, 161-170°C, 171-180°C, 181-190°C, 191-200°C, 201-210°C, 211-220°C, 221-230°C, 231-240°C, 241-250°C, 251-260°C, 261-270°C, 271-280°C, 281-290°C, 291-300°C, 301-310°C, 311-320°C, 321-330°C, 331-340°C, 341-350°C, 351-360°C, 361-370°C, 371-380°C, 381-390°C, 391-400°C, 401-410°C, 411-420°C, 421-430°C, 431-440°C, 441-450°C, 451-460°C, 461-470°C, 471-480°C, 481-490°C, 491-500°C, 501-510°C, 511-520°C, 521-530°C, 531-540°C, 541-550°C, 551-560°C, 561-570°C, 571-580°C, 581-590°C, 591-600°C, 601-610°C, 611-620°C, 621-630°C, 631-640°C, 641-650°C, 651-660°C, 661-670°C, 671-680°C, 681-690°C, 691-700°C, 701-710°C, 711-720°C, 721-730°C, 731-740°C, 741-750°C, 751-760°C, 761-770°C, 771-780°C, 781-790°C, 791-800°C, 801-810°C, 811-820°C, 821-830°C, 831-840°C, 841-850°C, 851-860°C, 861-870°C, 871-880°C, 881-890°C, 891-900°C, 901-910°C, 911-920°C, 921-930°C, 931-940°C, 941-950°C, 951-960°C, 961-970°C, 971-980°C, 981-990°C, 991-1000°C, 1001-1010°C, 1011-1020°C, 1021-1030°C, 1031-1040°C, 1041-1050°C, 1051-1060°C, 1061-1070°C, 1071-1080°C, 1081-1090°C, 1091-1100°C, 1101-1110°C, 1111-1120°C, 1121-1130°C, 1131-1140°C, 1141-1150°C, 1151-1160°C, 1161-1170°C, 1171-1180°C, 1181-1190°C, 1191-1200°C, 1201-1210°C, 1211-1220°C, 1221-1230°C, 1231-1240°C, 1241-1250°C, 1251-1260°C, 1261-1270°C, 1271-1280°C, 1281-1290°C, 1291-1300°C, 1301-1310°C, 1311-1320°C, 1321-1330°C, 1331-1340°C, 1341-1350°C, 1351-1360°C, 1361-1370°C, 1371-1380°C, 1381-1390°C, 1391-1400°C, 1401-1410°C, 1411-1420°C, 1421-1430°C, 1431-1440°C, 1441-1450°C, 1451-1460°C, 1461-1470°C, 1471-1480°C, 1481-1490°C, 1491-1500°C, 1501-1510°C, 1511-1520°C, 1521-1530°C, 1531-1540°C, 1541-1550°C, 1551-1560°C, 1561-1570°C, 1571-1580°C, 1581-1590°C, 1591-1600°C, 1601-1610°C, 1611-1620°C, 1621-1630°C, 1631-1640°C, 1641-1650°C, 1651-1660°C, 1661-1670°C, 1671-1680°C, 1681-1690°C, 1691-1700°C, 1701-1710°C, 1711-1720°C, 1721-1730°C, 1731-1740°C, 1741-1750°C, 1751-1760°C, 1761-1770°C, 1771-1780°C, 1781-1790°C, 1791-1800°C, 1801-1810°C, 1811-1820°C, 1821-1830°C, 1831-1840°C, 1841-1850°C, 1851-1860°C, 1861-1870°C, 1871-1880°C, 1881-1890°C, 1891-1900°C, 1901-1910°C, 1911-1920°C, 1921-1930°C, 1931-1940°C, 1941-1950°C, 1951-1960°C, 1961-1970°C, 1971-1980°C, 1981-1990°C, 1991-2000°C, 2001-2010°C, 2011-2020°C, 2021-2030°C, 2031-2040°C, 2041-2050°C, 2051-2060°C, 2061-2070°C, 2071-2080°C, 2081-2090°C, 2091-2100°C, 2101-2110°C, 2111-2120°C, 2121-2130°C, 2131-2140°C, 2141-2150°C, 2151-2160°C, 2161-2170°C, 2171-2180°C, 2181-2190°C, 2191-2200°C, 2201-2210°C, 2211-2220°C, 2221-2230°C, 2231-2240°C, 2241-2250°C, 2251-2260°C, 2261-2270°C, 2271-2280°C, 2281-2290°C, 2291-2300°C, 2301-2310°C, 2311-2320°C, 2321-2330°C, 2331-2340°C, 2341-2350°C, 2351-2360°C, 2361-2370°C, 2371-2380°C, 2381-2390°C, 2391-2400°C, 2401-2410°C, 2411-2420°C, 2421-2430°C, 2431-2440°C, 2441-2450°C, 2451-2460°C, 2461-2470°C, 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PROTESTERS MOBILISED FOR ASSAULT ON EMBASSIES AND CONSULATES ACROSS EUROPE

LONDON About 100 Kurdish protesters occupy the Greek embassy saying they are prepared to burn themselves to death. A woman sets herself on fire.

DUSSELDORF Demonstrators enter the Greek consulate. Around 30 arrests are made near the regional parliament.

HANOVER Around 15 protesters occupy the Greek consulate and throw missiles at police.

STOCKHOLM Police arrest 50 pro-Kurdish demonstrators after scuffles in front of Greek embassy.

COPENHAGEN A Turkish woman is taken to hospital after setting herself on fire at the Greek embassy. Protesters arrested after storming embassy.

HAMBURG Police try to remove demonstrators in front of the British and Greek consulates. Protesters smash windows and say they will set themselves alight.

MOSCOW Dozens of Kurdish demonstrators leave the Greek embassy around mid-day after giving themselves up to police.

THE HAGUE Demonstrators burst into the Greek ambassador's residence taking his wife, son and housekeeper hostage, and draping a flag from the building.

COLOGNE Injuries are reported among demonstrators and police after protesters try to occupy the Greek consulate.

BRUSSELS About 50 protesters enter the Greek embassy and threaten to set themselves on fire. They later leave building voluntarily after talks with police.

BONN Protesters inside the Greek embassy are said to be holding one staff member hostage. Two more people held in the Kenyan embassy say the German authorities.

PARIS Police remove Kurdish demonstrators from the Kenyan embassy and free seven employees. Protesters occupying Greek consulate are also removed.

STUTTGART Police storm the Greek embassy and arrest 27 protesters. Outside the city a 17-year-old Kurdish woman sets herself on fire.

MARSEILLES Police force several dozen demonstrators out of the Greek consulate where they had threatened to set themselves on fire.

GENEVA More than 20 demonstrators enter United Nations building by slipping through the gates as a vehicle enters.

STRASBOURG Thirty protesters armed with petrol cans occupy the Greek consulate and threaten to set fire to the building. Police later remove all of them after heavy tear gas.

ZURICH Protesters break into the Greek consulate and refuse to allow the building's owner and a policeman to leave the building.

MILAN About 20 Kurds break into the Greek consulate and hold the consul hostage for four hours before leaving the building.

BERN Kurdish demonstrators occupy the Greek embassy.

VIENNA Protesters take five hostages at Greek embassy compound while others storm the Kenyan embassy and threaten to set the building on fire.

STRASSBOURG Thirty protesters armed with petrol cans occupy the Greek consulate and threaten to set fire to the building. Police later remove all of them after heavy tear gas.

Hour by hour, a new Kurd attack

THE CALLS began within hours of the news that Abdullah Ocalan had been arrested. They started after a meeting of the Kurdish Workers' Party (PKK) in its mountain stronghold in the borderlands of Iraq and Iran and fanned out through Madrid, Rome, Paris, London, Bonn and Moscow.

At 4.30pm yesterday outside the Greek embassy in Holland Park, London, Necla Kanpeper, 15, doused herself in petrol and set herself alight while shouting slogans of Kurdish freedom. As she was taken away on a stretcher, badly burnt, she gave a victory sign. The crowd cheered.

The hours between the call to mobilise and Necla's self-immolation was a demonstration of the power of the Kurds' network. Across Europe buildings were stormed and occupied, demonstrators set themselves on fire and there were battles with police. The raids had the precision of military operations. On Monday

night men, women and children gathered at PKK offices to co-ordinate action. Then the raids began. Mainly the targets were Greek embassies, Greece being the country the Kurds blamed for denying Mr Ocalan asylum and delivering him to the Turks.

At 1.30am in The Hague the wife of the Greek ambassador to the Netherlands was asleep at home with the couple's eight-year-old son and a Filipina maid when they were awoken by glass and breaking doors as protesters burst in.

As police went to the house the Kurdish flag, bearing a portrait of Mr Ocalan, was hung out of the window. In the next few hours hundreds more Kurds gathered, trying to force their way in and being beaten back by riot police.

At 2.50am, at the Greek embassy in Park Road, Holland Park, the caretaker, Babis Patouris, was awoken by the front door being smashed. Scotland

Yard's Royalty and Diplomatic Protection Group officers arrived with other colleagues and set in motion a plan honed over previous sieges.

Over the next few hours similar scenes were played out in more than 20 cities across Europe. In Geneva, at 4.30am, 50 Kurds slipped through a side-door at the Palais des Nations, the UN's European headquarters, and overpowered the only guard. A UN spokeswoman said the protesters "were probably armed" and demands had been issued for the freeing of Mr Ocalan. She said no such assurance could be given and the Kurds were being asked to leave.

But instead of leaving, other Kurds smashed their way into the Greek embassy in the Swiss capital, Bern, and the consulate in Zurich, where they took hostage the consulate building's owner and a policeman who tried to negotiate.

From then on every hour brought a fresh assault on a

diplomatic building. They were not always Greek. Kenya is also seen by the Kurds as culpable in Mr Ocalan's arrest and in Paris police ejected protesters who had taken over the Kenyan embassy. The no-nonsense approach of the French was also in evidence in Strasbourg, where they fired teargas into the occupied Greek consulate and retook it, holding 30 Kurds. They used the same tactics to recapture the Greek consulate in Marseilles.

The Kenyan embassy in Vienna was stormed at 8.30am. Three hours earlier a group broke into the Greek legation, taking hostage the ambassador, Ioannis Yennimatas, his wife, and three embassy staff.

In Germany which has the largest Kurdish population in Europe, the Kenyan embassy in Bonn was occupied and two staff held. Another staffer at the Greek embassy was held hostage. Kurds occupied consulates or held protests in Leipzig, Stuttgart, Frankfurt,

Hamburg, Berlin, Cologne, Dusseldorf and Hanover.

The reaction of the governments on the receiving end of the raids was mostly bewildered. They were caught on the hop. Greece said it was furious and threatened "merciless" retribution. Dozens of Kurds were rounded up and jailed in Greek cities.

Through its political wing, ERNK, PKK leaders said the occupations were a spontaneous act of popular anger

over which they had no control. But the plans were laid before Mr Ocalan arrived in Turkey yesterday morning, and when it was still believed he was in Kenya. The protests were organised on Monday night, in what turned out to be a failed last-ditch attempt to press Greece to not hand him to the Ankara government.

In London, as the siege continued, the Foreign Office said the matter was "essentially between Turkish and Kenyan au-

thorities". Although "Ocalan has apparently renounced violence, there is still substantial evidence of recent violent terrorist activities by the PKK".

The Kurds in the embassy retorted that, if necessary, they would kill themselves in trying to free their leader. During the day it became clear this was no empty threat.

In Stuttgart a 17-year-old Kurd received serious burns after dousing herself in petrol. In Copenhagen another woman

was critically ill, also after self-immolation.

News of events around Europe filtered back to the crowd at the London embassy. Bottles were thrown and barriers kicked down. Negotiations were going on with those inside the embassy. It was then that Necla Kanpeper poured petrol over herself and set herself on fire. Her mother said, "She did it in protest at the totally unjustified British and world stance on the Kurdish issue."

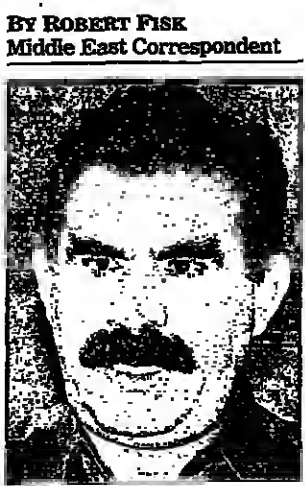
Psychopathic killer who is great hope of a nation

OFFERING ONE of his regular Kurdish Workers' Party (PKK) ceasefires to the Turkish army, Abdullah Ocalan appeared at a damp, draughty press conference in a cement shack in the Bekaa Valley in Lebanon six years ago. His theme: the brotherhood of the Turkish and Kurdish peoples. "We are so close, we are like the finger and the fingernail," he announced. And I couldn't help wondering how often the two had been separated in southern Turkey.

Ocalan is, even in many Kurdish eyes, a psychopathic killer - a Kurdish Abu Nidal who punished suspicion with death, whose guerrillas lamed their opponents not just with collaborator executions but with the slaughter of every member of the family of every collaborator. The Turkish security forces responded with murder, ethnic cleansing and wholesale invasion of the very northern Iraqi "safe haven" which we - the West - set up for the genocide-stricken Kurds.

Ocalan is no political innocent, no abider by human rights, no Robin Hood - though the socialist characteristics might suit the man with the bright, staring eyes. "Both Kurds and Turks are tired of bloodletting," he told us in 1993. "Permit me to return unarmed to Kurdistan in peace to practice political action and start a dialogue between us." The Turks told him to get lost.

But the events of the past 24 hours embrace more than just international hypocrisy. There



Ocalan: To be extradited

is a broader, far more important context to the hijacking of Turkish aircraft, to attacks on Turkish embassies and diplomats - as the Turks are themselves well aware.

But it also raises questions about the policies of the United States towards Kurdistan's 20 million people, the largest nation in the world without a state. Only a month ago, the United States, whose CIA mission in northern Iraq was destroyed by President Saddam

Hussein in 1996, was trying yet again to create an anti-Saddam alliance between the two more parochial Kurdish leaders, Massoud Barzani of the Kurdish Democratic Party (KDP) and Jalal Talabani of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK).

After their visit to Washington Barzani, whose movement collaborated with Saddam to destroy the PUK three years ago, and Talabani, whose support from Iran gave Barzani an excuse for seeking his overthrow, are now - more or less - on board the latest US campaign to overthrow the Beast of Baghdad.

With very good reason, Turkey was deeply troubled at this latest alliance. If Barzani and Talabani were ever to create an embryonic Kurdish state in northern Iraq, the threat of a much larger Kurdish entity - including parts of Turkey, Syria and Iran as well as Iraq - would appear greater. The Turks were thus very suspicious of Washington's latest "peace-making".

If the western Allies had offered independence to the Kurds who overthrew their mutual enemies (the Ottoman Empire) in the First World War, why shouldn't Washington offer independence to the Kurds if they helped to topple Saddam?

How could Turkey show its anger? One way: to invite a senior Iraqi official to Ankara to discuss a withdrawal of Turkish landing rights for US and British fighter-bombers at the Incirlik and Balman airbases in southern Turkey - the very air-

fields from which Anglo-US aircraft are bombing northern Iraq. Tariq Aziz duly arrived in Ankara at the weekend as an honoured guest of the Turkish prime minister, Bulent Ecevit - only to be told, on Monday, that his request had been turned down. And then - momentum mirabilis - within hours of Turkey's rebuff to the Iraqis, Ocalan fell into their hands in Nairobi, where the CIA happens to have its Africa headquarters.

After its military-strategic alliance with Israel, Turkey has become one of America's best friends in the Middle East and an even more important strategic ally against Iraq. Ever since Ocalan was put aboard a flight out of Syria last year for Moscow, Rome and points east and south, Washington has demanded the PKK leader's extradition to Turkey.

The US administration knew that Turkey would demand capital punishment for its most infamous "terrorist" - so its advice was, in effect, a death sentence.

So what happens next? True, it's not a good time to fly on Turkish airlines or take a Turkish holiday or queue at a Turkish embassy visa office. Mr Ocalan's chums are about as choosy as a Cruise missile when it comes to the civilians they slaughter in the pursuit of their longer-term political aims.

But the Kurds, whose existence merits a state every bit as much as the Palestinians, are again a major issue in the Middle East.

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BRIT AWARDS 99

Tonight 8.00pm ITV. No jeans or trainers.

Scientists pour scorn on food scare

THE SCIENTIST at the centre of the furore over genetically modified (GM) food broke his silence yesterday to say he was sure his fears about it would be proved correct.

Less than two hours after a gagging order on him was lifted, Dr Arpad Pusztai reiterated his fears about transgenic potatoes he had used in experiments on rats. "I would not eat them," he said. His work is now being submitted for review by independent scientists, who will inform the Government whether it has any merit. Previously Dr Pusztai had claimed, through intermediaries, that the Rowett Institute in Aberdeen, where he had carried out the work, was suppressing his results.

Yesterday, the Rowett announced that it would publish the results and pass them for independent examination to the Royal Societies in London and Edinburgh.

Since being forced to retire last August, after the rat experiments were discredited by an investigation at the institute, Dr Pusztai, 68, has suffered a heart attack and been under a legal ban preventing him discussing the matter publicly.

In a statement yesterday, the Rowett said: "Dr Pusztai has been repeatedly requested to provide papers for publication on all his work. He has not yet done so." It added: "The institute can no longer be responsible for his analyses or views."

Meanwhile, leading British experts in plant science launched a withering attack on Dr Pusztai's work with rats fed

BY CHARLES ARTHUR
AND STEVE CONNOR

GM potatoes, some of which had had lectins - a potential toxin - added separately.

The results were a "red herring", said a panel of scientists from universities and publicly funded research institutes, and should not be used as an excuse for a moratorium on the development and growth of transgenic crops. One of the panel accused Dr Pusztai of double standards, pointing out that he had applied for a biotechnology patent on a plant protein, and had claimed in other studies that the same lectins used in the Rowett experiment could benefit health.

"The gentleman wants it both sides," said Professor Christopher Leaver, head of the plant science department at Oxford University. "The experiments from what I know of them were rather muddled. We must not generalise from a simple, lab-based experiment."

Supporters of Dr Pusztai have claimed that the results of his rat feeding experiments indicate that the "gene switch" used in the process - called a cauliflower mosaic virus promoter - may stunt the growth and immune system.

However, Professor Leaver said the cauliflower mosaic virus is ubiquitous and everyone has eaten it many times with their food. "It's the most widespread gene promoter in science and there is very little doubt it is safe," he said.

Ray Baker, chief executive of the Biotechnology and Biolog-

ical Sciences Research Council, said Dr Pusztai's views were unrepresentative and that there are thousands of scientists who would support the potential benefits of GM food and crops.

He said it was important "to reject the idea that scientists are speaking with different voices" on an issue that has generated 25,000 field trials in 45 countries involving 60 different plant species. Professor Don Grierson, a geneticist at Nottingham University whose work led to the first GM tomato, said his findings had meant less waste and a better product. "It's wrong to say it's Frankenstein food," he said.

Claims that GM food is not thoroughly tested were also attacked by Mike Gasson, head of genetics and microbiology at the Institute of Food Research in Norwich. The tests on GM food cover nutritional value, potential toxicity, the unwitting transfer of genes from one organism to another and the concern over possible secondary effects of genetic modification. "All of those issues are very rigorously assessed... and nothing in the marketplace now is in anyway unsafe," said Dr Gasson.

A coalition of 29 consumer development, health and environment organisations called for a five-year block on commercial growing of GM foods for commercial purposes yesterday. "The Government seems to be deaf to all but a few, carefully selected commercially based opinions," said the campaign coordinator, Sandra Bell.

"Safety" a priority, page 8



GM food opponents highlight their fears with a display of a giant ice cube containing five 'mutated' fish in London yesterday Philip Meech

Dixons

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No reason for beef ban says adviser

THERE ARE no scientific grounds for retaining the beef-on-the-bone ban, the government's Chief Scientific Adviser said yesterday.

Sir Robert May announced that there was "not much of a case" for the ban and claimed that it was politics rather than hard evidence that had persuaded ministers to keep it in place.

Sir Robert's comments contradicted the Minister of Agriculture, Nick Brown, who decided to extend the ban by six months on the grounds of scientific advice and because the need to protect public health was "paramount".

Mr Brown infuriated farmers but claimed that he had to follow the advice, revealed in *The Independent*, of the Chief Medical Officer, Liam Donaldson, that there was still a small risk of BSE remaining in beef bones.

BY PAUL WAUGH
Political Correspondent

But Sir Robert, the Department of Trade and Industry's most senior scientist, said that the ban was "a mixture, in my view, of a political and scientific decision. On purely scientific grounds I personally don't see much point in banning beef-on-the-bone," he told BBC radio.

"But you have to see it in a much wider context of the past history, particularly in Europe," he added.

The Shadow trade and industry secretary, John Redwood, said that Sir Robert's comments proved the "humbug" of the Government's stance.

The National Farmers' Union also welcomed his comments, claiming that they proved the six-month ban should be lifted immediately. "We have always said that,

based on the scientific evidence available and the minute risk from beef-on-the-bone, consumers should have the freedom to choose whether they eat it or not," a spokesman said.

"Whether the decision is scientific or political, the fact is that the ban has not been lifted yet. In terms of our members this may cause concern but to a certain extent it doesn't matter what the reason is."

A leading Blairite think-tank claimed last night that the beef-on-the-bone ban may have been motivated as much by the demands of Europe after the BSE-crisis as by concern for human health.

Demos said that it was time for the Government to stop using "pseudo science" and allow consumers to make up their own mind about beef on the bone and genetically modified foods.

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Attack on Oftel's number changes

THE TELEPHONE watchdog Oftel came in for fierce criticism yesterday for proposing yet another change to the numbering system.

It was accused of failing to put customers first and of being too easily swayed by phone companies' claims of technical difficulties with the existing numbers.

MPs said that Oftel should review the phone numbering scheme "so that in future the scheme puts customers' interests first". Plans to change phone numbers are due to be implemented in July.

Customers in Cardiff, Coventry, London, Portsmouth, Southampton and Northern Ireland will have to change their numbers under the scheme.

The overhaul comes just four years after Phoneday, when numbers across the UK were altered by adding an extra 1 into every area code. Such changes are inconvenient for residential users and hit businesses with extra costs for publicising their new numbers.

The report by the Trade and Industry select committee said that Oftel had failed to consider alternatives to another upheaval and did not ask customers for their views. "We recommend that when Oftel next proposes changes to geographic codes, residential and business customers in each of the areas affected are directly consulted," the report said.

Businesses that now use the freephone 0800 system are furious about the new system, which will see all such numbers changed.

Many companies have spent thousands of pounds promoting their easy-to-remember numbers, which will have to be changed. The cost to business of the swap has been estimated at £500m. The committee said it was "totally unconvinced" by Oftel's arguments for the need to change free-phone numbers.

It added that it was left with the impression that freephone changes were a "smokescreen" to allow Oftel to take control of the most valuable numbers, which it could then auction to companies.

Oftel's director-general, David Edmunds, responded firmly to this last accusation, arguing that Oftel's primary aim was to ensure sufficient capacity on the telephone network. Mr Edmunds also said the changes to area codes were essential.

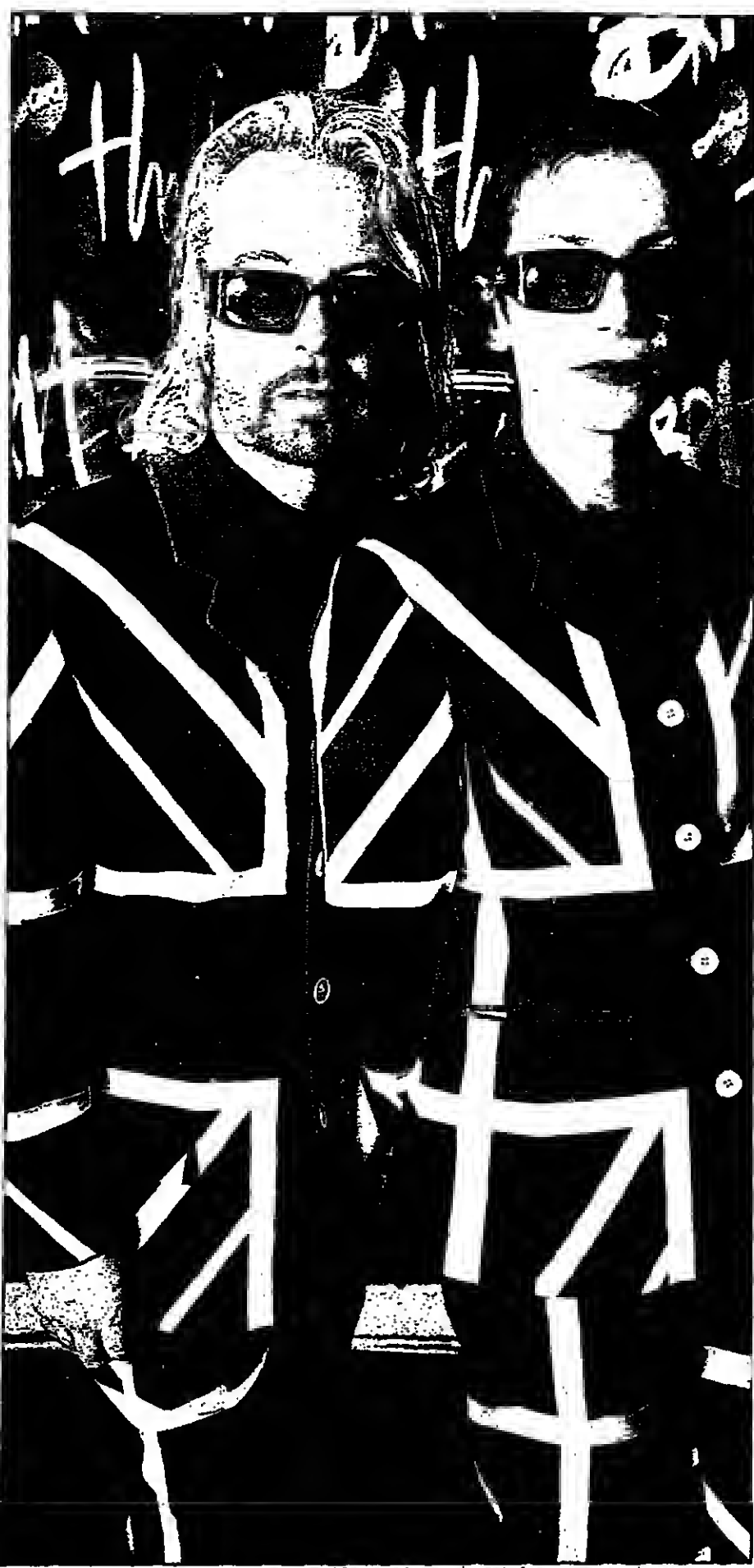
"If these code changes do not take place as planned, London and perhaps other cities will run out of telephone number capacity by summer 2000. It is highly unlikely, therefore, that significant change can or should be made to what is now known as The Big Number campaign."

On 0800 numbers, Oftel said it had held discussion with the Freephone Users Group and would look at new suggestions, which could allow some free-phone users to continue to use their existing numbers.

The Freephone Users Group itself praised the MPs' report. Its chairman, John Chaplin, said: "We have waged a six-month campaign to make Oftel see sense. This report must help Oftel realise that its ideas were and always have been flawed."

"We should now draw a line under this unfortunate episode and move forward with Oftel to achieve a solution that benefits business, the consumer, network operators and the UK as a whole."

By SARAH SCHAEFER
Political Reporter



Annie Lennox and Dave Stewart of the Eurythmics reformed to accept their award



Prize winners the Manic Street Preachers and Natalie Imbruglia

Robbie Williams is the angel of the Brits

ROBBIE WILLIAMS won three awards last night at The Brits – the biggest event in the rock and pop calendar. The former Take That singer made a spectacular entrance at the start of the ceremony, coming on to the stage on a rope.

The Manic Street Preachers won both the best group and best album awards; and there were two awards also for the Australian singer Natalie Imbruglia, voted best international newcomer and best international female artist.

The Eurythmics – Annie Lennox and Dave Stewart – reformed to play a set at the show's climax after receiving the outstanding achievement award.

In an evening at the London Arena in Docklands glittering with celebrities, and cabinet ministers, the focal point of the show was a political one – the launch of "Drop the Debt", the music industry campaign, revealed in *The Independent* last week, to persuade world leaders to write off Third World debt.

The campaign was launched by the rock star Bono, of U2. In an emotional moment he presented an award to the former world heavyweight champion Muhammad Ali, who has been an international ambassador for the Jubilee 2000 campaign to cancel unpayable debt.

Ali had said earlier: "Nothing is more important to the poorest nations of Africa and Latin America than to be able to keep more of what they earn and invest it in their people and the lives and well-being of their children. I support Jubilee 2000's efforts to bring the issue of debt relief to the attention of the world."

Fatboy Slim, whose alter ego Norman Cook is marrying the Radio One presenter Zoe Ball, was voted best dance act, and The Corrs were best international group.

There was a further prize for the award laden *Titanic*, which won best film soundtrack. Des'Ree was best British female artist, and Beck best male international artist.

Indy band Belle and Sebastian, highly popular on the college circuit, won the best British newcomer award.

Robbie Williams's awards came for best British male artist, best video for his song "Millennium", and best single for "Angels".

There was surprisingly no award, despite three nominations, for Gomez, the band that won the Mercury Music Prize last year.

Other familiar names who missed out last night were Catalonia and Massive Attack, and in the international section Madonna and Alanis Morissette.

Some of the biggest names in British pop – such as the Spice Girls and Oasis – did not receive nominations because their albums were released outside the qualifying period.

The tragic groupies, Review, page 4

THE WINNERS

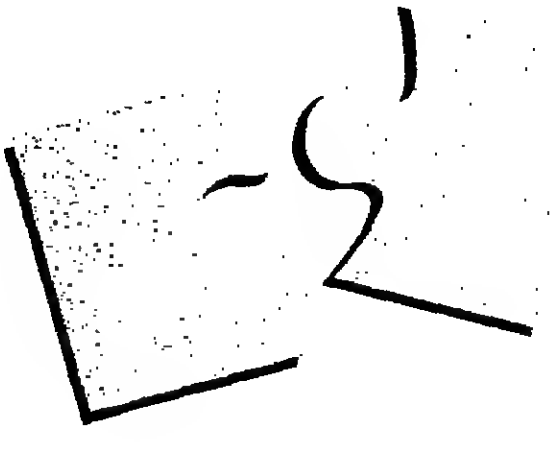
- Best group:** Manic Street Preachers
Album: Manic Street Preachers, *This Is My Truth, Tell Me Yours*
Newcomer: Belle and Sebastian
Dance act: Fatboy Slim
Soundtrack: *Titanic*
International group: The Corrs
International newcomer: Natalie Imbruglia
International male solo artist: Beck
International female solo artist: Natalie Imbruglia
British male solo artist: Robbie Williams
British female solo artist: Des'Ree
Single: Robbie Williams, "Angels"
Video: Robbie Williams, "Millennium"
Outstanding contribution: Eurythmics

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Exhausted runners gather after the world's oldest pancake race in Olney, Buckinghamshire, yesterday. The race, in its 544th year, is entered by women who compete for a kiss from the Pancake Bell ringer. *Tom Flinton*

Student admissions revolution planned

A REVOLUTION in the way students apply for universities has been proposed by a working group of teachers and academics. Students would apply electronically after they had taken A-levels, instead of being offered places on the basis of grades predicted by teachers.

Such a system has been discussed for years but never put out to consultation before. Previous attempts to introduce change foundered on the reluctance of universities to alter terms and the insistence of exam boards that the dates for schools exam results could not be brought forward.

At present, A-level results come out in the third week of August. Under proposals devised by the working party, applicants would express a preference for courses and universities during the previous two terms. They would go to open days and might be inter-

BY JUDITH JUDD
Education Editor

viewed. Exam results would be published about 10 days earlier in August. Students would have a week in which to apply to university and would list their preferences in order. They would be able to make three applications. Universities would in turn rank students in order.

The exercise would be made possible by electronic matching of applicants' choices to university places by the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service. Students would then have to wait at least 10 days to hear if they had succeeded.

Critics of the existing system say students have difficulty choosing the right course and institution because they pick a list of six universities in December, nine months before they want to go to college.

Some do not achieve the ex-

pected grades and about 50,000 people enter the clearing process run by the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service, which matches students to spare places at the end of August and in September. Equally, some students do better than they expected.

A National Union of Students spokesman said: "The new system would give proper information to students, who could make informed decisions. We hope it will go some way to end the lottery of clearing and should be easier to administer and leave all concerned a lot less paperwork."

Brian Smith, chairman of the working group and vice-chancellor of the University of Wales, said: "While the current system has some faults, it has proved to be generally reliable. We need to be sure any new system will be a real improvement and will not present

serious practical difficulties in its implementation. Once we have feedback from admissions officers and others we will consider the system further."

Heads are eager for change. John Dunford, general secretary of the Secondary Heads Association, said: "We have been fighting hard to press the case for post-qualification entry to get away from the dependency on predicted grades and the long period between application and admission. I had hoped that the working party would lead to a full consultation of schools and universities rather than the present limited exercise."

The consultation will involve focus groups of admissions officers and schools.

Lord Dearing backed a post-qualification admissions system in his report on higher education and expected that the new arrangements would begin within two years.

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So, if the GM food crisis worries you, there is something you can do about it today. Shop with Iceland.

And if the whole issue makes you angry, sign our in-store petition calling for a five year freeze on GM food while you are there.

ICELAND

Fighting for better food

For more information on the GM issue or Iceland's stance call our genetic hotline on 0990 133373 or pick up a leaflet in store.

Governors of failing colleges face the sack

FAILING COLLEGES that do not improve could be closed under an aggressive drive to raise standards, which is due to be announced today.

Ministers will tell governors they face the sack if they do not hit new targets for improving the worst performers. The tough regime is the most demanding yet to be imposed on further education colleges. George Mudie, an Education minister, is expected to deliver the Government's uncompromising message to the principals and governors of the 446 English colleges at their annual conference today.

The best colleges can expect financial rewards, but there will be "zero tolerance" of those marked down by inspectors. Mr Mudie is expected to tell the conference that some reports "make shocking reading".

"There are some excellent colleges. But there is too much complacency about standards; and there is some outright failure," he will say.

Colleges, which provide academic and vocational courses for about four million people each year, are in the vanguard of Tony Blair's drive to expand access to education and training. As part of this, ministers are determined to cut drop-out rates, as high as 85 per cent on some courses. Absenteeism is another target, with up to 25 per cent of students missing class in some cases.

But Mr Mudie will praise the very best sixth-form and further

BY BEN RUSSELL
Education Correspondent

education colleges, which produce A-level results on a par with the highest-achieving grammar schools.

Ministers will use a new £115m standards fund to back measures to improve teaching standards and staying-on rates. New regulations giving them the powers to intervene are already in place.

Governors at one of Britain's biggest colleges became the first victims of the clampdown earlier this month when they were forced to resign after receiving unprecedented criticism from the Further Education Funding Council. David Blunkett, the Secretary of State for Education, imposed a new board of governors at the 23,000-student Wirral Metropolitan College after allegations of "mismanagement".

Reports due out at the end of this month are expected to be highly critical of two further colleges. Bilston Community College in Wolverhampton and Matthew Boulton College in Birmingham.

The warning to colleges comes after Mr Blunkett's announcement last year of the biggest expansion yet of sixth-form and further education colleges. But he said the increase must be matched by improved standards. He warned then the Government "will be as tough on failing colleges as we have been on failing schools".

THE WORST RESULTS

Ranked by percentage of students who gain a qualification at the end of their course.

Arnold and Carlton College, Nottingham - 26%
College of North West London - 31%
Working Men's College, London - 31%
Royal Forest of Dean College - 32%

Hackney Community College - 33%
Barnet College - 34%
Hammersmith and West London College - 36%
Basildon College - 40%
City of Liverpool College - 40%
Stoke on Trent College - 40%
Thomas Danby College - 40%

Source: Confirmed figures from college performance indicators 1996-97.

IN BRIEF

Acid attack conviction upheld

PETER HUMPHREY, 54, jailed for 12 years after setting up an acid attack that left a babysitter disfigured, lost his Court of Appeal claim that his conviction was unsafe. He hired a man to throw acid at his estranged wife in Siston, Devon. But Beverley Hammett, 19, opened the door.

Girl eats stashed cocaine

A GIRL of three was taken to hospital in Newcastle after eating cocaine hidden by dealers in a discarded refrigerator. She thought it was sherbet and took a lick before running home. She left hospital after treatment.

Supermarket offers online love

STAFF AT the Bristol headquarters of Somerfield, the supermarket chain, are being given the chance to fall in love through their own Internet dating page. Somerfield Soul Mates is thought to be a first in the workplace.

Crackdown on number plates

DRIVERS WHO customise their number plates to make them difficult to trace risk being fined and having the plates confiscated. The police and the Government will launch a scheme next month to try to combat crime.

Teenager killed mother over car

A TEENAGER who killed his mother by chubbing her with a champagne bottle when she would not let him use her car, was jailed indefinitely. Simon Geldart, 18, of Darlington, Co Durham, was convicted of murder at Teesside Crown Court.

Group sex film passed by censor

A HIGHLY controversial Danish film in which the characters pretend to be retarded and engage in some of the most explicit sex scenes outside the world of hard-core movies has been cleared for cinema release by the British Board of Film Classification.

The uncensored version of Lars Von Trier's *The Idiots*, a comedy about a commune of young people who isolate themselves by pretending to be mentally ill or retarded, features a fleeting sexual penetration scene and erect penises in a group sex sequence. It premiered at last year's Cannes Film Festival on a wave of notoriety about its copious sex and nudity.

Although it received a further screening at the London Film Festival last November, there were doubts about whether it would receive the all-clear for a national cinema release in its unabridged form.

The film's UK distributor, Metro Tartan, submitted *The Idiots* for classification at the beginning of December and its

BY RHYS WILLIAMS

relatively swift sanction marks the second significant decision by Robin Duval, who took over as director of the BBFC from James Ferman four weeks ago.

The fact that Mr Duval has wasted little time in both approving *The Idiots* and granting *The Exorcist* a video release will be seen by many in the film industry as evidence of the new regime's determination to act decisively rather than let difficult issues drag on indefinitely, as has happened in the past with films such as *Crush*.

Although the sight of penetrative sex and erect penises is not unprecedented in British high street cinemas - the 1991 Japanese film *In the Realm of the Senses* featured both, - it is extremely rare.

The other likely area of controversy relates to the depiction of the mentally ill and disabled. As well as the pretence adopted by the film's central characters, *The Idiots* also includes extras



Lars Von Trier insisted on nude days, where the cast, crew and director would all strip off in a bid to return to 'pure cinema' Rex Features

who are genuinely disabled. Mr Duval said: "The first issue was whether the film would be offensive to people with genuine disabilities and that required a lot of thought. The conclusion which we arrived at was that the approach was sensitive and positive. In no sense was it

insensitive or parodic of people with genuine disabilities."

Sophie Tranchell, managing director of Metro Tartan, said: "The film works as a whole. If you watch it for half-an-hour, you will come away with the wrong impression. The people who pretend to be disabled are revealing their inner idiot. The

film is more about the limitations of middle-class manners. If you are cracking up inside is it more useful to hold it in or let it out? It's about inhibitions, that's why there's so much nudity."

Mr Von Trier has a reputation as an enfant terrible of contemporary cinema. He directed

the 1996 film *Breaking the Waves*, which earned an Oscar nomination for the actress Emily Watson and his horror series *The Kingdom* was shown on British television recently.

The Idiots is the first product of Dogme 95, directors who agreed to make films under strict rules, including shooting

all scenes on location, using natural light and hand-held cameras. This "vow of chastity" is an attempt, they say, to return to a pure cinema, stripped of technical trickery. During the making of *The Idiots*, Mr Von Trier insisted on nude days when everyone, cast, crew and director, all went naked.

Code on forged art to be issued

BY IAN BURRELL
Home Affairs Correspondent

A CODE intended to protect art lovers who mistakenly buy forged or stolen works is to be unveiled by the Home Office.

Paul Boateng, minister for Crime Reduction and the Police, will give details next month of a due diligence code, which will help duped buyers to make insurance or compensation claims for works of art that have to be returned to their rightful owners.

The code has been brought in to reform a market that depends largely on cash transactions and which some art experts denounced last night as "medieval". Its introduction follows the jailing this week of John Drewe for masterminding the biggest fraud in contemporary art this century.

Drewe flooded the international art market with works in the style of Alberto Giacometti, Ben Nicholson, Jean Dubuffet and Nicholas de Stael. He went to extraordinary lengths to provide histories, or provenances, for his works.

The new code, featured in this week's *Law Society Gazette*, has been drawn up by the Association of Chief Police Officers in conjunction with the Council for the Prevention of Art Theft. It follows a 12-month pilot project.

Under the guidelines, art buyers will be advised to establish the identity and address of the seller and request a "paper trail" of documents to support the artefact's sales history. They will also be advised to make checks with registers of stolen art and pay by cheque.

Robin Fry, a council director, said the code would help to modernise the art market. "At the moment people take more care in buying a lock-up garage in Southland than on the purchase of a piece of art costing £250,000. The art market is still operating the way it did 300 years ago," he said.

Racist threats drive English family out of Scotland

AN ENGLISH family who moved to Scotland a year ago are packing their bags to return south after enduring what they say has been a year-long stream of racist taunts and attacks. Their two young girls were threatened with having their throats slit and their windows have been smashed.

The last straw for John and

BY STEPHEN GOODWIN
Scotland Correspondent

Jane Annable, who moved from Nottinghamshire, came at the weekend when their house at Musselburgh was broken into - a burglary they are convinced was carried out by their anti-English tormentors.

"We know the people who did

it," Mrs Annable, 31, said yesterday. "They were actually out in the street when we got back, laughing about it and shouting, 'F*** off back to England you English b*****'."

Though the Commission for Racial Equality maintains such extreme anti-English behaviour is rare, there is increasing evidence of an ugly side to the

Scots' rekindled sense of nationhood. The Annable family seems to have been unlucky.

Mrs Annable is half Scottish and the family moved north after she traced her grandmother to Musselburgh. They moved out of their first home in the Granton area of Edinburgh when "racists" smashed every window in the flat.

Mr Annable, 35, disabled since a mining accident 13 years ago, said it started with stones, but in the end their attackers were throwing rocks.

Similar hatred greeted them in Musselburgh. Police were called when eight-year-old Amy was attacked in the street, a window was smashed and eggs thrown at the front of the house.

A car window was broken days before the burglary, in which £20,000 of property was stolen.

His wife claimed the trouble came from just two or three families who were not typical - "they're the scum of the earth" - and a lot of neighbours had been good to them. Mrs Annable, who is a care assistant, said she was too nervous

to go out unless it was to work. "I definitely think the Scottish Parliament has something to do with this," she said.

Inspector Gavin Buist, race relations officer with Lothian and Borders Police, said a correlation had been noticed between the announcement of the Home Rule parliament and anti-English incidents.

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Tories choke on chance to make a meal of GM panic

IT WAS easy to understand why the geeks and political eggheads in the Tory party backroom thought they would be on to a good thing by exploiting the public panic over genetically modified food.

There was the Prime Minister under pressure, they thought, from all quarters, with the high court of media and public opinion unimpressed by his statements that he eats funny food with relish and lastings of genetically modified tomato paste. All the politically organic ingredients were there for an opposition show-stopper: media hysteria, public outrage, ministerial links with supermarkets' profit mo-

tives, sacked scientists, cover-ups and a general feeling of the Government in a mess.

So it was hardly surprising the Tory agriculture spokesman, Tim Yeo, was encouraged to weigh in with a demand for a government emergency statement. Opposition whips had succeeded, for once, in mustering a respectable turn-out and William Hague put in an appearance to encourage Mr Yeo to go over the top. Yet things did not go over the top.

The Food Minister, Jeff Rooker, blundered the House with science and bluster and regained the initiative with a bravura performance.

Mr Yeo began by complaining that the Minister of Agriculture, Nick Brown, was absent and that no cabinet minister was present.

He accused the Government of being under pressure from President Bill Clinton and, in a gibe against the DTI minister Lord Sainsbury of Turville, demanded ministers whose independence and integrity could be relied upon.

It should have been an easy ride for Mr Yeo, but his obvious political opportunism shone through too brightly for Mr Rooker to have much difficulty rebutting the assault. His most effective response was a list of genetically modified

THE SKETCH



MICHAEL BROWN

products on sale, with dates, under Tory rule, when they were approved. "Tomato paste - approved in 1994; soya beans - 1995; maize -

first approved in 1996-97." Mr Rooker soon got into overdrive, trapping the Tories by saying he genuinely believed "we can say that the public can have confidence in foods placed on sale by ministers in the previous government".

"What about raw potatoes?" shouted a Tory from a sedentary position, in a reference to the alleged findings that have created the current scare. Mr Rooker seized his opportunity with a clever put-down. "My advice on raw potatoes is the same as on raw chicken - don't eat it; don't do it."

His most devastating put-down of the Tories was to remind the

House they had negotiated against other EU member-states' proposals for a food-labelling warning when they were in government.

By now Mr Rooker was in confident mood, aided by the Tory rebel Ian Taylor (Surrey), who referred to "headless chickens" of the human variety who were a greater threat to the consumer than genetically modified food. Mr Taylor brought common sense to the proceedings by asking the minister to make clear to the public that there is no such thing as safe food.

Mr Rooker was on a roll and seized the opportunity presented by Mr Taylor further to embarrass the

Tories. Mr Hague could see things were not going his party's way and made a quick exit. William Cash (C. Stone) said "It doesn't matter what decisions were taken in the 1980s or 1990s", prompting Labour shouts of "Oh yes it does".

But Mr Cash made a plea, accepted by Mr Rooker, that the issue should not be left exclusively to scientists and should be referred to an ad-hoc select committee.

Mr Rooker sat down to backsteps from his own side, with the Tories looking bemused at how he had successfully turned the tables against them.

Thomas Sutcliffe is away

Safety pledge on sale of modified food

THE GOVERNMENT made a fresh attempt to reassure the public about genetically modified foods yesterday by declaring that consumer safety was its top priority.

Jeff Rooker, the Food Minister, promised MPs that such foods would be clearly labelled with no "free-for-all" on the release of modified crops into the environment.

Answering an emergency question, Mr Rooker stressed that products such as tomato paste and soya were put on the market only after "careful scrutiny" of their health impact.

He said that much current public concern could have been avoided if the last government had forced American manufacturers to segregate GM from non-GM ingredients. He said that the Tories "missed the boat" by failing to secure agreement with the European Union to insist that the products were separated and labelled.

British retailers claim that they cannot identify modified soya products because supplies from the US use a mixture of GM and non-GM sources.

GM PRODUCE

BY PAUL WAUGH
Political Correspondent

To the cheers of Labour backbenchers, Mr Rooker also revealed that GM-based tomato paste was approved by the Tories for sale in 1994, soya in 1995 and maize in 1996 and 1997.

The Government had opened up to public scrutiny the activities of its advisory panels on GM issues and was pressing the European Commission to label animal feeds as quickly as possible.

"We believe we have a robust system for ensuring that the consumer is fully protected. Above all it is the Government's first priority to ensure that the safety of consumers is fully protected," Mr Rooker said. He condemned recent press "scare stories" about the issue and claimed that biotechnology development had "huge potential" to benefit society.

However, the Tory agriculture spokesman, Tim Yeo, said that public confidence over the issue was being damaged by government "misleading".

He said the only way to restore public confidence was to recognise the risks and have ministers whose "independence and integrity" could be relied on.

He demanded to know whether Tony Blair had come under pressure from President Bill Clinton to help out Monsanto, the American biotech giant that has led the controversial field, and called for a three-year delay before herbicide tolerant and insect resistant crops were planted on a commercial basis.

"A Government that gets its friends to suppress the publication of inconvenient research findings, accepts sponsorship from companies involved in promoting the commercial growth of GM crops and refuses to publish the advice it receives on this sensitive issue doesn't deserve the public's trust," he said.

Paul Tyler, the Liberal Democrat food spokesman, called for effective labelling, which he said was crucial to allow the public and British retailers to make decisions.



Tony Blair receiving a kiss from a nurse while visiting the emergency ward at North Hampshire hospital, Basingstoke

John Lawrence

Hereditary peers deal upsets MPs

GROWING DISCONTENT was apparent among Labour backbenchers yesterday over Government plans to retain nearly 100 hereditary peers beyond stage one of House of Lords reform, although Peter Mandelson, the former cabinet

LORDS REFORM

BY SARAH SCHAEFER
Political Reporter

minister, insisted that the deal would safeguard other important legislation.

Andrew Mackinlay, the MP for Thurrock, made clear he was "not happy" about the proposal and said there was "deep concern" whether the "unsatisfactory" transitional stage would endure. "The principle of hereditary peers is alien to us who are socialist," he said.

But Mr Mandelson defended the amendment, to be put forward by Lord Weatherill, the chairman of the cross-benchers, which would allow 91

hereditaries to be elected to the Lords during the transitional stage. He said it would be "an added incentive" for hereditary peers not to disrupt the reform.

Speaking during the resumed committee stage of the House of Lords Bill, which will scrap their right to sit and vote, the MP for Hartlepool said the deal would enable the Government's entire legislative programme to proceed "expeditiously".

John McAllion, the Labour MP for Dundee East, said he would vote against such plans if introduced into the Bill in the Lords. The Commons was being asked to pay "a kind of

Danegeld" to the Lords to stop it blocking other Bills, he said.

Tony Benn, the MP for Chesterfield, has already warned that the Government could face a backbench revolt if it accepts the proposed compromise because it would breach the party's manifesto commitment to abolish hereditary voting rights.

Dr Liam Fox, the Tory constitutional spokesman, said the Commons was being "treated with contempt" by a Government that expected Labour MPs to oppose the amendment if put forward in the Commons but vote for it when the Bill comes back from the Lords. "We have a eunuch parliament."

Labour backbenchers are there merely for the convenience of the executive. Members allowing themselves to be patsies of the executive is a deeply dispiriting experience."

Margaret Beckett, the Commons leader, ruled out accepting the compromise move in the Commons because, if the Bill is blocked in the Lords, ministers want to be able to invoke the Parliament Act to force it onto the Statute Book without the Weatherill amendment.

Mr Benn said: "If this goes through, the first example of the modernisation for the millennium is the Prime Minister making 91 hereditary peers into life peers."

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Cook warns of Kosovo failure

ROBIN COOK, the Foreign Secretary, will return to the Kosovo peace talks at Rambouillet after warning the Commons that the negotiations could end in failure.

Mr Cook will meet his French counterpart, Hubert Vedrine, to review progress and try to push the Serbs and ethnic Albanians towards a settlement to stop the fighting. However, speaking in the Commons yesterday, Mr Cook warned that a successful outcome was far from assured.

"In my statement to the House two weeks ago, I warned that I could not guarantee that the talks would necessarily end in agreement. That remains the case today," he said.

The international powers have set a deadline of noon on Saturday for a deal at the peace conference in the 14th-century

PEACE TALKS

BY BOB ROBERTS

chateau outside Paris. Serb negotiators appear to have backed down on the key demand to allow the ethnic Albanians wide-ranging self-rule.

The Kosovo Albanians also seem ready to sign a three-year interim agreement and tone down their demands for independence.

However, the sticking point is whether the Serbs will agree to a Nato-led force coming into Kosovo to enforce the deal - which both the Albanians and the Americans have insisted upon.

The talks continued as the first contingent of British tanks, armoured vehicles and artillery destined for a possible role in a Kosovo peacekeeping force set sail.

Poll highlights Tory Euro split

A BREAKAWAY pro-European Tory party would embarrass William Hague by winning widespread support in this summer's European Parliament elections, a new Mori poll has found.

The poll, commissioned by two former Conservative MEPs, showed 11 per cent of the public would vote for a party that strongly backed a single European currency at the elections in June.

Mori found that support for the official Conservative Party would also be cut from 26 per cent to just 20 per cent, leaving it with no more seats than in 1994, when Labour swept to victory across the country.

By contrast, the party list system means that the pro-Europeans could win up to half a dozen seats. If Kenneth Clarke was their leader, their

MORI POLL

BY PAUL WAUGH

vote would rise to 19 per cent, the survey found.

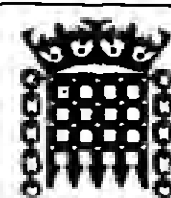
The research was commissioned by the Pro-Euro Conservative Party, a group set up by the former Tory MEPs Brendan Donnelly and John Stevens after they resigned from the party over its hardline stance on the euro. They said William Hague could not survive such a "humiliation".

A spokesman for Conservative Central Office said: "This is just sour grapes from the sour grapes party. These two guys have no credibility because they couldn't get through the democratic selection process of the party." Other polls showed that the majority backed the Tory stance to see how the euro worked first.

Reform setback for legal aid

GOVERNMENT measures to overhaul the Legal Aid system suffered another setback when peers voted 189 to 134 to prevent the proposed Criminal Defence Service (CDS) from employing lawyers. Under the Access to Justice Bill, the Legal Aid Board will be replaced by a new government-run CDS, which will give contracts to lawyers for publicly funded criminal cases. But Lord Thomas of Gresford, the deputy High Court judge and Liberal Democrat peer, argued that there was no need for the change.

THE HOUSE



Today's agenda

Lords 2.30pm
■ Debate on closure of Severn Tunnel in summer
■ Debate on separation of powers in the Lords between judiciary and legislative and executive branches of Government
■ Debate on replies to correspondence by ministers and officials

Deaths from toxic fumes

ABOUT 30 people a year die from carbon-monoxide poisoning and one-third of the deaths are believed to have taken place in rented accommodation, the Housing minister Nick Raynsford said.

Official trips

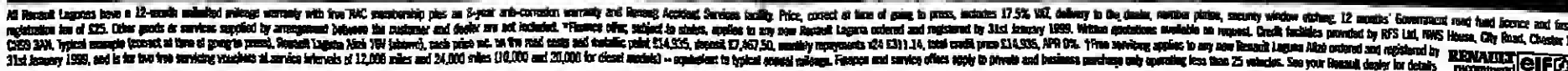
TRAVEL COSTS of Michael Meacher, the Environment minister and an accompanying civil servant were £8,700 when they took business class flights to New Zealand to discuss possible environmental damage to the Antarctic last month. The Deputy Prime

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Minister, John Prescott, confirmed he had taken RAF plane and helicopter flights six times since Labour took power in May 1997.

Parliament date

THE SCOTTISH Parliament, the first north of the border in nearly 300 years, will meet on Wednesday 12 May at its temporary building on the Mound, Edinburgh, the Government announced.



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Asterix routs rivals at box office

BY JOHN LICHFIELD

AFTER SUCCESSFULLY resisting the Romans for 40 years, Astérix the Gaul and his monumental sidekick, Obélix, have defied all the odds – and the treachery of the French movie critics – to defeat the massed legions of Hollywood.

Despite a series of stinking reviews in the French press, the first Astérix movie with live actors, including Gérard Depardieu as Obélix, has had a triumphant first two weeks at the box office. In its first week, the movie, *Astérix et Obélix Contre César*, broke the French attendance record, with 2,718,443 tickets sold. By the end of its second week it had reached 4.3 million, well on the way to the 10 million target set by its producer.

The feisty little cartoon-book Celt and his dim friend are fighting a rearguard action in defence of French – and European – cinematic culture, almost as desperate as the Gaulish resistance to the Romans 2,000 years ago. At £27m, the movie is the most expensive made in France. It carries the hopes of the entire French cinema sector, the only fully functioning such industry still surviving in Europe.

Attendance at French films in France fell below 30 per cent of the total audience for the first time last year, largely because of the success of the Hollywood blockbuster *Titanic* and several American full-length cartoons.

The French industry was counting on the Astérix movie to reverse this trend and to prove that it was not doomed to become a bit player even in its domestic cinemas.

The film, supported by



Christian Clavier and Gérard Depardieu are defeating all-comers with the film of Astérix and Obélix

French, German and Belgian money, with French, German and Italian actors, was viciously received by the French movie critics. They said it was clumsy, too dependent on Hollywood-style, computer-generated special effects and

unkindest cut of all, not very funny. Most adults who have seen the movie tend to agree. Children and adolescents, the main target audiences, do not care.

As the movie's producer, Claude Berri (*Jean de Flo-*

rette) said, the cerebral, slow-moving, sensitively-acted movies praised by French critics tend to vanish at the box office, even in France. He said the panning of Astérix was a good sign. And so it proved. *Astérix et Obélix Contre*

César now benefits from the French school holidays, and should flourish for at least two more weeks. It has beaten main chief rival for the children's audience, the Disney-distributed *A Bug's Life*, into a poor second place.

Uproar over 'lazy' judge in Aids trial

BY JOHN LICHFIELD
in Paris

THE HIGH-PROFILE trial of a former prime minister and two ex-ministers for failing to prevent Aids from being passed on by French blood banks is threatening to subside into chaos and farce.

The week-old trial has turned into a media witch-hunt, not against the accused but against the presiding judge. He has been accused by all sides of incompetence, laziness, arrogance, bad manners, laxity towards the accused, making jokes in bad taste and using language more usually associated with the far right.

The president of the court, Christian Le Guehec, 68, a former appeal judge who has never presided over a trial before, has hinted that he might stand down if the complaints continue. He attributes his difficulties not to his own failings but to the feverish media expectations of the trial, the first of its kind before a new, part-political, part-judicial court.

"This trial is in public. But it is not made for the public," he said at one stage – a remark that was taken as further evidence of his arrogance. Doubts about Mr Le Guehec's command of the detail of the proceedings were compounded by a question he whispered to a fellow judge, while forgetting to turn off his microphone: "Remember me, who is Garretta?"

Dr Michel Garretta is the man at the centre of the whole affair: the former head of the French state blood service, who has already served a prison sentence for allowing plasma contaminated with Aids to be given to haemophiliacs.

On another occasion, the



Former prime minister Laurent Fabius yesterday AFP

judge used the word "Sidaïque" for "Aids victim" (after the French acronym Sida). This is a dismissive and insulting word used only by the far-right National Front. The next day he made a doubtful joke about heroin addicts and Haitian homosexuals but most damagingly of all, according to lawyers for the victims, Mr Le Guehec has given an easy ride to the three accused, and especially to the former Socialist prime minister, Laurent Fabius.

Mr Fabius and two of his former colleagues are accused of manslaughter. It is alleged they delayed the systematic testing of donors' blood for five critical months in 1985 to allow a French firm to complete its development of testing equipment. An alternative was already available from the United States.

In a two-hour rebuttal of the accusations last week, Mr Fabius denied he was even aware of these commercial considerations. He said he had done all he could to bring for-

ward the testing of donor blood and save lives. He gave a convincing performance but critics pointed out he was given a free run. The president of the court, the only person able to do so, did not interrupt him once to ask a question or challenge his assertions.

Part of Mr Le Guehec's problem is that there is no precedent in France for a trial of this kind. It is being heard by a new court – the "Cour de Justice de la République", in which erring ministers are tried by a panel of three judges and 12 fellow politicians. The criticism of Mr Le Guehec has come partly from the media and partly from victims and their families. But it has been fed, anonymously, by the politician-judges sitting alongside him.

Relations between the court president and the politician-judges came to a head at the end of last week at a private meeting, in which the MPs strongly advised Mr Le Guehec to spend the weekend catching up on his homework.

Jury visits death path

A BRITISH court convened in the village of Domachevo in western Belarus yesterday, with judge and jury visiting the site in a forest where Anthony Sawoniuk allegedly slaughtered Jews in the Second World War.

The 77-year-old, who now lives in south London, denies killing two men and two women in Domachevo between September and December 1942.

BY ADAM LEBOR
in Domachevo

The case is the first war crimes trial in British history and the first time that a British court has convened on foreign soil. Judge Humphrey Potts and 12 jurors arrived in Belarus on Monday.

Yesterday they began to relive the horror that was visited on Domachevo after Ger-

man forces occupied parts of the Soviet Union.

Led by Belarussian prosecutors, the court walked down the "path of death", the route from the Jewish ghetto to a nearby forest, where 3,800 Jews were killed and dumped in mass graves. Nearby was the site where Sawoniuk allegedly slew his four victims, after they escaped one of the massacres.

Review, front



Sawoniuk: Denies crimes

Firms to pay Nazi-era slaves

ACCEPTING "MORAL responsibility" for the Holocaust, top German companies are to set up an industry fund to compensate former slave workers and other Nazi-era victims.

The companies promised to launch the fund by 1 September, but did not say how much industry will pay into it.

The chairman of Deutsche Bank, Rolf Breuer, an architect of the fund, called a joint decla-

BY TONY CZUCZKA

ration establishing the fund by 12 German companies and the government a "milestone".

Chancellor Gerhard Schröder said: "This paper shows that German business can deal responsibly with its history."

The pledge was German industry's first formal step toward creating the compensation fund, a response to law-

suits against German companies in the United States by former slave workers.

Mr Schröder's chief of staff, Bodo Hombach, said 200,000 to 300,000 former slave labourers would be eligible for payments.

Those firms setting up the foundation for "reconciliation, responsibility and the future" include car makers Volkswagen, DaimlerChrysler and BMW, chemical and pharma-

ceutical companies Bayer, Hoechst and BASF, Deutsche and Dresdner banks, the industrial firms Siemens, and the Allianz insurance company.

A US lawyer pressing victims' claims, Ed Fagan, called the announcement "a step in the right direction" but said the small number of companies backing the effort was not yet enough. At least 263 firms used slave labour, he said. (AP)

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Every year thousands of children fall through the net.

In the local areas, where these children are concentrated, more than 25% of them will begin life as underweight babies, they have a 30% higher mortality rate and they are twice as likely to die in childhood accidents.

These same children are disadvantaged in education. They can become disruptive in class. Unable to cope, schools exclude them in their thousands - 150,000 exclusions in a single year. The majority are children from poorer homes.

Without a decent start in life, many young people never catch up.

Truancy in these deprived districts is currently running at four times the national average.

While one in four pupils at secondary schools near rundown housing estates, leave at sixteen without a single GCSE, five times the national average.

The vast majority of underage pregnancies can be traced back to the same areas.

4,700 girls of school age fell pregnant in 1998 - more than any other country in Europe.

Uneducated, unhappy young people will buck the system when they feel abandoned by it.

Many turn to crime. And pay the price.

Britain locked up 11,000 teenagers in 1998. That's a 40% increase in just five years - a depressing European record.

A staggering 43,000 children run away each year.

Life on the streets can be desperate and dangerous, with the real risk of being caught up with drugs and prostitution, simply to survive.



Beating the odds

Many of the problems children face are complex and interlinked.

The way we see it, they demand a holistic approach.

There is no quick fix. But there is progress to be proud of. Last year The Children's Society helped nearly 40,000 children, directly.

We are the only national charity working with youngsters on remand in prison.

We were the first to open a refuge for those at risk on the streets, the first to develop programmes in primary schools to proactively prevent exclusions and the first to introduce family centres.

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The Children's Society is their advocate, advisor, friend.

"When Mum left we stayed with Dad. He couldn't get work so they took our home. Social Services put us in one of them bed and breakfast places. Dad and my brother were upstairs, I was on another floor. It was horrible. The guy in the next room started touching me. One night he tried to rape me. They were going to put me and my brother in care. It was the people at The Children's Society that stopped it. They talked to me lots about what happened. And they helped us get a flat. Life savers, that's what Dad calls them."

Karen aged 14

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UN plea over Indian burnings

AMID A darkening emotional mood of gloom and apprehension after the burning to death of an Australian missionary and his children three weeks ago, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Mary Robinson, met the Indian Prime Minister, Atal Bihari Vajpayee, yesterday and voiced the international community's dismay about this and other anti-Christian attacks.

Mrs Robinson's trip to India to take part in a regional human rights workshop was planned months ago, but it assumed new significance after the murder of Graham Staines and his sons Philip, 10, and Timothy, 8, in a remote village in Orissa, eastern India, on 23 January.

The Australian, who had spent more than 20 years working in leprosy hospitals in Orissa, was barricaded into his jeep with his sons by a chanting mob in the middle of the night, and the vehicle set alight.

No one has been charged with the murders but police suspicion settled on a Hindu nationalist fanatic called Dara Singh, who was linked to a series of attacks on Muslims.

The Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party-led coalition government threw itself into damage limitation, dispatching a ministerial team to the site of the murders. It reported that organisations with links to the government were not involved. The report was met with scepticism because, whoever the true culprits, the horrifying crime took place in an atmosphere of anti-Christian hysteria deliberately whipped up

BY PETER POPHAM
in Delhi

by the BJP's Hindu nationalist allies. In the past, organisations such as the Bajrang Dal, Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) and Shiv Sena have attacked India's biggest minority, the Muslims. The destruction of Babri Masjid in Ayodhya and the communal massacres that followed are blamed squarely on the storm troops of Hindu nationalism.

Until last year Christians had never felt the brunt of such attacks. All that has changed. Since the election of the present government 11 months ago, India's Christians have faced an unprecedented onslaught, with dozens of churches destroyed or damaged. The murders in Orissa appeared to be the climax of an orchestrated campaign. As Mrs Robinson told the BBC on Monday, the attacks "have damaged India's reputation in the world for religious tolerance" - and as religious tolerance was a key issue she felt should be raised with the government.

The Orissa murders have proved to be a watershed in the government's relations with the intellectual community, prompting a spate of gloomily reflective articles on the state of the nation. Even cheerleaders of Hindu nationalism such as *The Pioneer* newspaper have joined in the breast-beating and hand-wringing. But horrifying though the killings were, there is something artificial and unreal about the strength of the reaction to them. Terrible things happen in India all the time;



The UN Human Rights commissioner, Mary Robinson (left) with Sonia Gandhi, president of the Congress Party

sharing the front page with the Orissa murders was the story of an unattended newborn baby dragged from a hospital by a dog and destroyed in the street.

Despite the condemnations, attacks on Christians have continued. In Gujarat, where Hindu

nationalists are in power, a census of Christians is being carried out, which has raised the community's anxieties. Elsewhere the VHP has launched a campaign to "welcome back" to Hinduism tribal people formerly converted to Christianity.

Anyone brought up to believe in the tolerant character of Hinduism may be baffled. Its true goal is almost certainly to marginalise Sonia Gandhi, the Italian-born president of the Congress Party, stigmatising her as a member of an alien minority that is also weak. Hindu

zealots have accused her of causing her late husband, former prime minister Rajiv Gandhi, to be converted to Catholicism.

But it is the poor and defenceless whose lives are being thrown into turmoil by the persecution. And it is India's reputation as, in Mary Robinson's words yesterday, "a country ... which from the very outset of the United Nations has championed the cause of freedom and human rights" which is being damaged, perhaps beyond repair.

Bombs rock Uzbek capital

BY PHIL REEVES
in Moscow

THE CENTRAL Asian nation of Uzbekistan was reeling yesterday after its rigidly policed peace was shattered by six almost simultaneous bomb blasts in the capital, Tashkent, which killed nine people.

The president of the former Soviet republic, the autocratic Islam Karimov, a one-time Communist party boss, said the explosions were an attempt on his life.

One blast was inside government headquarters where Mr Karimov was to address the cabinet yesterday morning.

A policeman said he heard gunfire and grenade explosions as the president's car approached the cabinet building. The city centre was sealed off by armed police and troops and Russian television showed several wrecked vehicles next to deep craters, and tall buildings with shattered windows.

Shortly after the bombs - a rare outbreak of political violence in this country of 22 million - President Karimov, 61, said on state television the attackers aimed to "sow fear and panic in the civil population".

The president, nicknamed "Papa" by his subjects, has not shortage of enemies. Aided by his ruthless security forces, he has crushed almost all opposition in the last seven years.

He was first elected in 1991 in a poll widely seen as suspect and he extended his term in office by a referendum in 1995.

Two suspects were held at Tashkent airport in the afternoon, said Russian commentators. Speculation is likely to focus on an Islamic connection. Secular Uzbekistan has long feared the rise of Islamic fundamentalism, imported from neighbouring Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran, ignited by the religious freedom and dire social conditions resulting from Soviet collapse.

Tensions have also sharply increased with next-door Tajikistan, which has accused Tashkent of fuelling its civil war by helping the anti-government forces.

And Uzbekistan, riled by what it saw as domineering Russian tactics, recently announced its withdrawal from a security co-operation treaty between the 12-member Commonwealth of Independent States.

Yesterday, the Kremlin moved quickly to condemn the attack, issuing a statement from President Boris Yeltsin, who called it a "cynical terrorist act".

Cresson dossiers sent to police

EDITH CRESSON, the beleaguered European commissioner, suffered a serious blow yesterday when four dossiers detailing suspected fraud in one of her multi-million pound EU spending programmes were sent to Belgian police.

The move is an embarrassment to Ms Cresson, who had insisted that any problems within the Leonardo programme - administration of which had been contracted to a company called Ageron - were limited to mismanagement.

The oews comes at the worst possible time for the former French prime minister, who is battling to save her job as commissioner with responsibility for science, research, youth and education. She has been the prime target for critics of mismanagement and nepotism in Brussels, after revelations that she employed a dentist from her home town

BY STEPHEN CASTLE
in Brussels

as a scientific adviser on Aids.

The development increases the pressure for Ms Cresson's resignation, less than a month before a committee of experts is due to deliver an interim report on the European Parliament.

Last night Pat Cox, leader of the parliament's third largest group, the Liberal Democrats, said the revelations were significant and left Ms Cresson "potentially in the line of fire".

The Commission also announced that it had terminated the contract of Ageron. The Belgian-based private company earned a £70,000 annual management fee for administering Leonardo, a youth exchange and training project with a £400m-plus budget.

The allegations relate to overcharging and false invoicing by Ageron staff.

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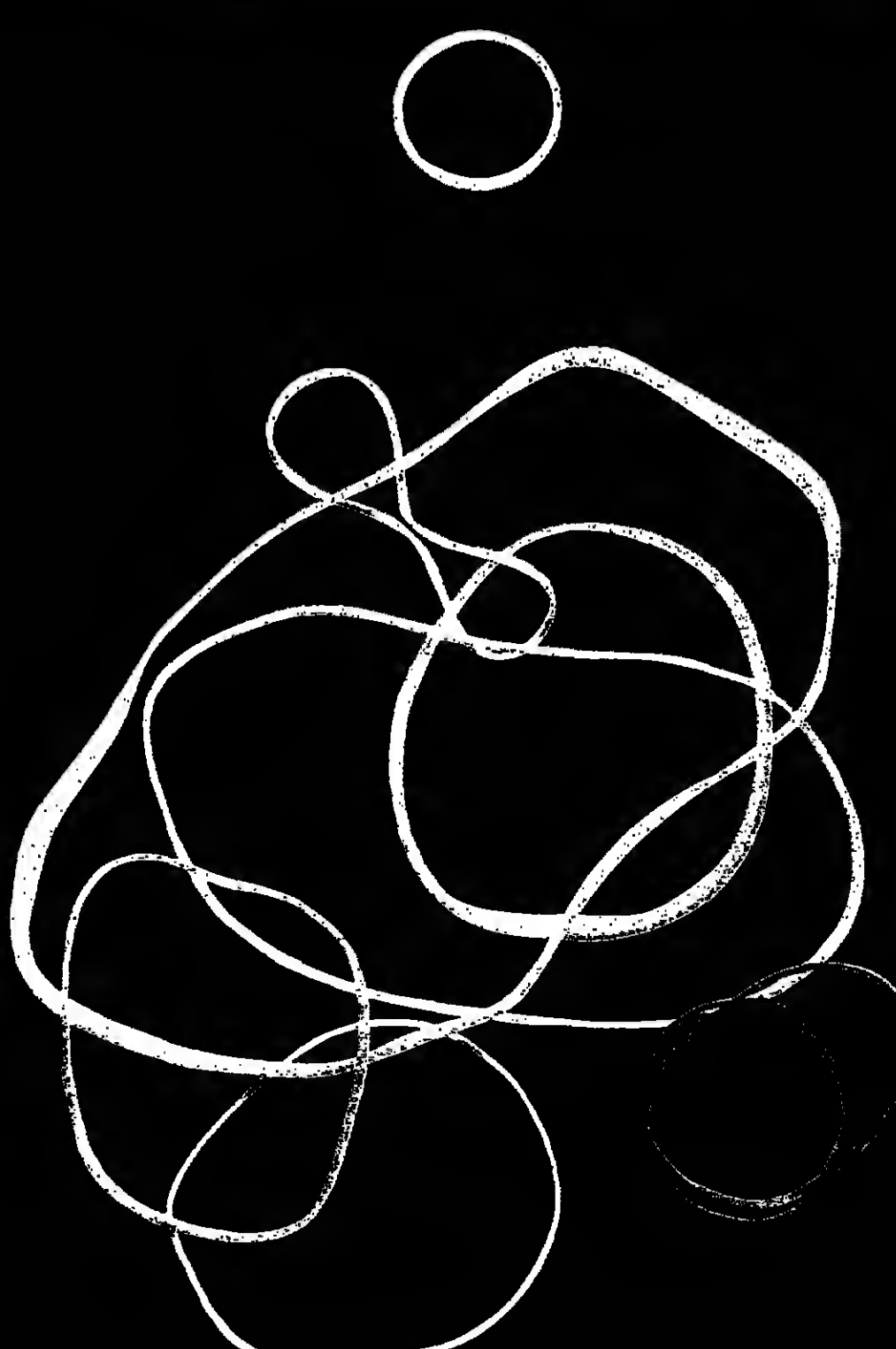
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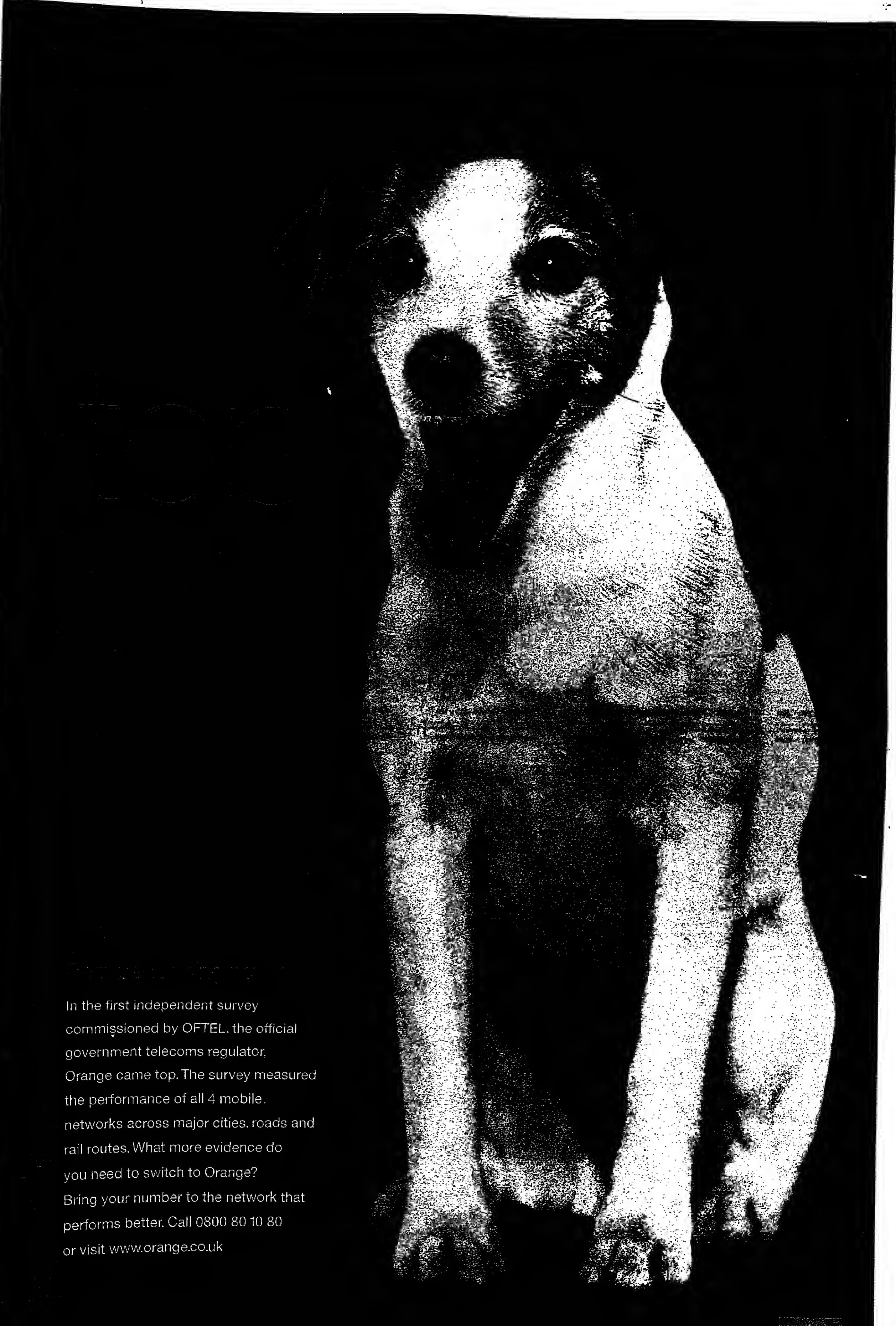
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THE INDEPENDENT
Wednesday 17 February 1999

Bombs rock Uzbek capital

BY PHILIP HUGHES
in Moscow

THE CAPITAL OF Uzbekistan was rocked by a series of explosions on Tuesday night, which were blamed by the authorities on a group of Islamic extremists. The explosions, which took place in the city of Tashkent, killed at least 10 people and injured more than 50. The explosions were described as "suicide bombings" and were carried out by a group of Islamic extremists known as the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU). The IMU is a group of Islamic extremists who are active in Uzbekistan and are known for their violent activities. The explosions were described as "suicide bombings" and were carried out by a group of Islamic extremists known as the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU). The IMU is a group of Islamic extremists who are active in Uzbekistan and are known for their violent activities.



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Clinton foes hit by trial backlash

DESPERATE to boost its image and electoral prospects for 2000 after President Bill Clinton's acquittal, the Republican Party has launched a nationwide effort to "reconnect" with its grassroots through more than 100 town hall-style meetings across the country.

How difficult that reconnection effort will be was illustrated yesterday in Washington, where leaders of three minority constituencies lambasted the Congressional party for giving succour to the Democrats' presentation of the party as "extremist".

The three groups - the Log Cabin Republicans, representing the party's gay and lesbian members, the New Majority Committee, promoting the interests of black and Hispanic Republicans, and Republicans for Choice, which combats the party's headline anti-abortion stance - attacked the Congressional party for perpetuating Republicans as "mean-spirited, intolerant, and agenda-less".

Citing Republican losses at the mid-term Congressional elections last November and the persistence of President Clinton's high poll ratings throughout the impeachment process, they warned that the party risked fulfilling Democrats' accusations of "extremism" unless it became more inclusive.

Where Republicans had successfully made "liberal" the word for the Eighties, they said, Democrats had managed to make "extremist" the word for the late Nineties - and make it stick to Republicans. According to Richard Tafel of the Log Cabin Republicans, "the rank and file are so depressed by the state of the

BY MARY DEJEVSKY
in Washington

party that they might bring back Newt Gingrich". The right-wing populist House Speaker resigned in November after the party's perceived failure at the polls.

In their single-minded pursuit of impeachment, he said, the Republicans had scared the public into thinking it was an "anti-everything party" and laid it open to accusations of hypocrisy. There was Bob Barr, he said - referring to one of the more rabid House prosecutors - who was now introducing "a defence of marriage Act" into Congress, "and he's on his third marriage".

Arguing for more inclusiveness towards minorities, Faye Anderson cited the efforts of more centrist state governors, including George W Bush of Texas, who campaigned in Spanish as well as English, and reinforced the Democrats' view that it was the higher than expected black turnout in Southern states last November that had helped to remove two apparently safe governors in Alabama and South Carolina. "The party is in trouble," she said, "and needs all the help it can get." Its adverse image among voters through impeachment "has inflicted incredible damage," she added, and borrowed from Bill Clinton the notion that the party should start to "look like America".

For pro-choice Republicans, Ann Stone said the party's stance on impeachment had sent the message that Republicans "wanted government out of the boardroom but were content to have it in your bedrooms".



A reveller dances on top of a float in Rio de Janeiro's Mardi Gras carnival. Reuters

School sweetheart lingers

WHILE THE White House sex scandal has vanished from the Washington map almost as rapidly as it arrived 13 months ago, some of the associated allegations - the use of dirty tricks against troublesome women, for instance - have lingered.

Making a rare appearance in Washington yesterday was Dolly Kyle Browning, Bill Clinton's Arkansas school sweetheart, who claims the Clinton camp sought to "disparage, defame and destroy her reputation" when she tried to publish an exposé of what she said was a long-term relationship between them.

BY MARY DEJEVSKY

Ms Kyle Browning, a property lawyer living in Texas, wrote a book, *Purposes of the Heart*, which recounts a woman's affair with a southern governor. The book, however, found no publisher and she and her husband published it privately last year, complaining that "Clinton, his agents and surrogates" did their utmost to stop it appearing.

The case was taken up by a watchdog organisation, Judicial Watch, which served preliminary papers last year and gave Mr Clinton until 27 July

to respond or face civil action.

Mr Clinton and Ms Kyle Browning have given different accounts of a meeting they had in 1994 at their school reunion. She says Mr Clinton apologised to her, suggested she come to Washington and offered to find her a job. Mr Clinton said during his testimony in the Paula Jones case that she acknowledged that the account in her book was untrue, but said she needed the money. His account was corroborated by a member of his staff, Marsha Scott, whom Mr Clinton had asked to remain within earshot to protect himself.

Trapped in the lift with Jimi Hendrix

AMERICAN TIMES
WASHINGTON

IT CAME into our building here in Washington a few months ago, and at first I barely noticed it. But it was always there somewhere, floating in the air just out of reach.

It is music. Or rather, it is Muzak, for there is a difference. As well as being a generic term, it is also a large and thriving company based in Seattle, in the fashionable Pacific North-West of the United States, with revenues of about \$100m. It pumps out its product via satellite feeds to thousands of businesses across America, broadcasting 60 different programmes, of which only one is now classic "background music".

It has its origins way back in the 1920s, when a military officer was trying his hand at the new science of telephony. General George Squiers was a formidable character, who experimented with radio in 1907, only a year after Marconi sent the first wireless message, and was the first passenger in an aircraft when he flew with the Wright brothers. He helped to create two of the most powerful instruments of American global domination: the United States Air Force, and Muzak.

General Squiers formed the name of his company from "music" and the name of his favourite high-technology company, Kodak. It was a roaring success, quickly becoming the soundtrack to the American century.

Whispering strings played cover versions of the Carpenters' "Afternoon Delight" or "A Walk in the Black Forest" as Americans went to the supermarket, the garage, motels, restaurants, fast-food joints or the toilet. It even accompanied Neil Armstrong to the Moon. When the US left Vietnam in 1975, the helicopters clattering away through small arms fire, Muzak played heedlessly on in the lobby of the American embassy while puzzled North Vietnamese soldiers skidded about the marble floor.

Much of it was, by common



Jimi Hendrix is a hot item in the muzak invasion

consent, terrible, unimaginative, dreary, saccharine-sweet rubbish that grated on the nerves. If that is still your mental image of Muzak, however, it is perhaps time to think again. Two years ago, the company had a small revolution, and it has put the emphasis back on the main product.

"This company was built on believing in the power of music," says Kenny Kahn, the vice-president for marketing, and music is now what it is about. Most of the programmes offered by Muzak these days are what they call "foreground music" - original versions of the songs, not camped-up reproductions. And it is more likely to be Nirvana or Jimi Hendrix, great products of the city of Seattle, than "Puff the Magic Dragon" arranged for strings.

The company no longer wishes to think about the bad old days and has become (slightly self-consciously) hip.

"Our goal is to say to people, 'We are not what you think we are,'" says Mr Kahn. It has a whizzo website and lots of new concepts to describe what it does, which sound like the sleeve notes from a techno album. Its technicians are now described as "audio architects". And it has paid off last week: the company was bought out for more than \$250m (£150m) by a Boston-based firm. It will take

a long time before the word loses its associations, but at least people have heard of it. "We have to deal with that," says Mr Kahn. "It's better to be recognised in some shape or another than not to be recognised at all," he says, paraphrasing Oscar Wilde.

Muzak is the world's largest radio station, sending DJ-free music around the nation by satellite and wire. It is about to start using the Web to sell its wares, taking a logical step on from its earlier use of technology: after all, General Squiers' company was originally called "Wired Radio".

And Muzak is no longer a term of pure invective, as it was a decade ago. Background music has become deeply fashionable, with the sound repackaged as "ambient", "lounge" or "cocktail".

It has not been universally popular in the *Independent* building in Washington. The property company that owns the block told us in its newsletter that everyone loved it, and that feet had been seen tapping in the corridors. Some, however, were banging their heads on the wall. There were dark plots hatched, whisperings about pliers and wiring systems. Suddenly last week, the seventh floor was silent again. But by Monday it was back. Muzak is, it seems, an unstoppable force.

ANDREW MARSHALL

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£10,000+	3.65	3.90	4.85
£5,000+	2.75	3.00	2.50
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£25,000+	2.50	2.75	2.96
£10,000+	2.25	2.50	2.72
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BUSINESS

Barclays declares war on costs as profits slip to £1.9bn

IN THE BUSINESS REVIEW

- The man who owns cyberspace
- The superstore that ate America
- Can DMGT survive the FTSE 100?
- The adman's adman revealed
- Investment

Plus: Hamish McRae, Diane Coyle, Derek Pain, Jo Davis, and The Trader

Dollar hits a high against the yen

THE DOLLAR hit a 10-week high against the yen yesterday after the Japanese government changed course on exchange rate and interest rate policy.

Eisuke Sakakibara, a Ministry of Finance official known as Mr Yen because of his influence on the Japanese currency, said he welcomed the recent fall in the yen. His comments, echoed by the governor of the Bank of Japan, sent the dollar through the 118 yen barrier for the first time since December. Moves by Japanese authorities to curb the rise in long-term bond yields helped dollar sentiment. The government said it would increase bond purchases and stem issuances in an attempt to prop up the struggling bond market.

Rolls-Royce wins £150m contract

Rolls-Royce, the aero-engine maker, has won a £150m contract with British Aerospace to supply engines to power Australia's Hawk fighter aircraft with British Aerospace. The contract, for Rolls-Royce Turbomeca Adour Mk 871 engines, covers 33 aircraft for the Royal Australian Air Force. Rolls-Royce will make the first batch of Adour engines at its Bristol plant, with the first to be delivered to BAe next month. Qantas will assemble and test the remaining engines from UK-supplied kits at its Sydney Airport workshops. Rolls shares closed 1.5p down at 256.5p, amid speculation of an exclusive link-up between General Electric of the US and Boeing.

Brown gets £12bn boost for Budget

GORDON BROWN, the Chancellor, received an unexpected pre-Budget boost yesterday after official figures revealed that the Government achieved a record budget surplus in January.

Economists predicted that the Government could be on course for an annual budget surplus of as much as £10bn, meaning that the Chancellor could afford to introduce a starting tax rate of 10p without cutting into mortgage interest relief or the married couples' allowance.

Jonathan Loynes at HSBC Securities said: "Mr Brown could conceivably spend several billion pounds on the March Budget and yet still forecast that he will meet his fiscal rules".

Other economists, however, were more gloomy, warning that monthly public finance figures tended to be volatile. Treasury officials also cautioned against reading too much into one month's data.

Although corporation tax receipts mean that January is always a good month for the public finances, the record monthly surplus of £12.4bn was substantially higher than City expectations.

Analysts said they had underestimated both the impact of self-assessment on income tax receipts and the fall in departmental spending.

Inland revenue receipts totalled £8.1bn in January, the Office for National Statistics said.

ONS to cut 1,000 jobs in efficiency shake-up

MORE THAN 1,000 jobs are set to go at the Office for National Statistics (ONS) as part of a wide-ranging shake-up of the agency, it emerged yesterday.

Announcing the recommendations of an independent efficiency review, Patricia Hewitt, Economic Secretary to the Treasury, said there was scope for annual cost savings of up to £20m at the ONS.

Ms Hewitt said she would consult with trade unions before implementing the recommendations of the review, which included involving private sector firms in data collection and rationalising support services.

An independent steering group, chaired by the Lloyd's TSB chief executive Peter Ellwood, recommended that the ONS's 3100-strong workforce be reduced by one-third.

If the recommendations are implemented, 680 ONS jobs would transfer into the private sector, while another 350 would be eliminated altogether.

No redundancies should be necessary, according to the steering group, with natural wastage accounting for most of the reduction in head count.

The departments most affected are likely to include personnel, finance, marketing and IT.

The steering group also recommended a shake-up in senior management at the agency, arguing that a strengthened management team and a new management structure would be needed to carry its proposals forward.

"The ONS, which came under fire for its handling of controversial revisions to key earnings figures in the autumn, is also the subject of a series of separate reviews."

Boots' option scheme breaks new ground

BOOTS YESTERDAY claimed it had broken new ground in the way companies account for employee share options with a scheme that will see Boots buy in existing shares rather than issue new ones.

The change will lead to a charge of £8m against Boots' profits in the current year with an expected charge of £20m a year thereafter. Boots said the arrangement would avoid the dilution of existing shareholders and help towards a more efficient capital structure.

"As far as we can see we are the first UK company to account for employee options in

Record fall in clothes and shoe prices

CLOTHING and shoe prices fell more sharply in January than at any time since 1947, according to official figures released yesterday, writes Lea Paterson.

However, despite the record fall in some prices, the UK's underlying inflation rate remained at 2.5 per cent, above the Government's 2.5 per cent target, the Office for National Statistics (ONS) said.

Prices of clothes and shoes fell by 6.8 per cent last month - the largest monthly drop since records began in 1947 - as retailers slashed prices in an attempt to draw consumers back into the shops.

Tough conditions on the high street also hit prices of household goods, including furniture and electrical appliances. Taken together, the prices of household goods fell by 4.7 per cent, the largest monthly fall since records began in 1956.

Despite these sharp falls, increases in non-seasonal food prices and higher fuel and light charges meant the underlying rate of inflation remained unchanged at 2.5 per cent in January. This was the second consecutive month that underlying inflation overshot its target.

Analysts said the data made further interest rate cuts next month look less likely, and the pound hit a record high against the euro, closing at 88.45p.

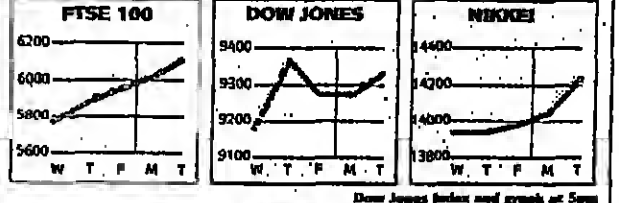
The headline rate of inflation - which includes mortgage interest payments - fell 0.4 per cent to 2.4 per cent, the lowest rate since September 1996.

The drop was largely due to lower mortgage costs, analysts said, with lenders passing recent interest rate cuts onto consumers.

High-street shoe shops cut prices in January by 6.8 per cent; more than at any time since 1947

Tom Craig

STOCK MARKETS

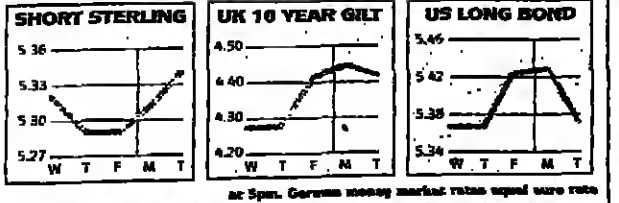


Source: Reuters

INDICES

Index	Close	Change	Change (%)	52 wk high	52 wk low	Yield (%)
FTSE 100	5108.60	85.40	1.7	5195.60	4599.20	2.61
FTSE 250	5200.90	23.70	0.5	5270.90	4247.60	3.20
FTSE 350	2892.90	36.30	1.3	2968.10	2210.40	2.70
FTSE All Share	2795.39	33.82	1.2	2886.52	2143.53	2.74
FTSE SmallCap	2748.10	7.50	0.3	2793.80	1834.40	3.58
FTSE Pledging	1228.90	9.90	0.8	1312.10	1046.20	4.41
FTSE AIM	128.70	16.71	1.3	1383.64	313.30	1.27
FTSE Europe 100	2775.22	21.12	0.8	2879.27	2018.15	2.12
FTSE Europe 300	1209.41	8.37	0.7	1332.07	880.63	1.98
Dow Jones	9334.88	60.51	0.6	9647.95	7400.30	1.65
Nikkei	14232.64	177.92	1.3	17352.35	12787.90	1.02
Hang Seng	9402.39	-23.03	-0.2	11926.16	6544.79	3.73
Dax	4504.68	23.13	0.5	5217.83	3853.71	1.74
S&P 500	1245.70	16.71	1.3	1383.64	933.32	1.27
Nasdaq	2348.73	27.37	1.2	2533.44	1357.08	0.22
Borsa 100	6449.40	1.82	0.0	7837.70	5320.90	1.64
Brazil Bovespa	8952.30	-37.83	-0.4	12339.14	4575.69	6.92
Belgium BEL20	3403.37	-4.66	-0.1	3713.21	2644.70	2.09
Amsterdam AEX	522.84	-0.47	-0.09	600.65	366.58	1.88
France CAC 40	4052.32	-12.87	-0.3	4404.94	2881.21	1.99
Milan MIB30	33759.00	-582.00	-1.7	39170.00	24175.00	1.21
Madrid IBEX 35	2729.30	-101.80	-3.7	3089.80	1669.90	1.90
Irish DSE100	5310.50	74.74	1.4	5581.70	3732.57	1.47
S Korea KOSPI	551.77	0.00	0.0	651.95	277.37	0.06
Australia ASX	2889.40	-18.40	-0.6	2948.70	2386.70	3.21

INTEREST RATES

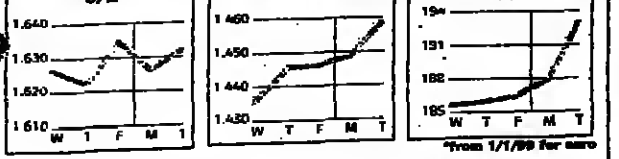


Source: Reuters

MONEY MARKET RATES

Index	3 month	6 month	1 year	10 year	15 year	30 year
UK	5.44	-2.08	3.25	-2.20	4.42	-1.50
US	5.00	-0.63	5.24	-0.41	5.03	0.45
Japan	0.33	-0.31	0.36	-0.46	2.09	0.13
Germany	3.09	-0.42	3.04	-0.73	3.91	-1.06

CURRENCIES



Source: Reuters

POUND

Index	Close	Change	Change (%)	52 wk high	52 wk low	Yield (%)
Dollar	1.6318	+0.016	1.00	1.6380	1.4500	0.6105
Euro	1.4595	+0.009	0.62	1.4679	1.3500	0.8773
Yen	192.74	+0.55	0.29	193.35	176.07	1.2607
E index	100.50	0.00	0.00	104.80	95.00	1.0880

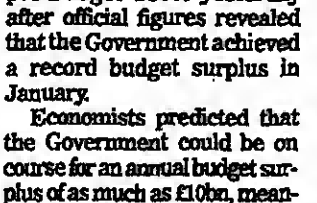
OTHER INDICATORS

Index	Close	Change	Change (%)	52 wk high	52 wk low	Yield (%)
Brent Oil (\$)	10.32	0.04	0.4	14.34	7.00	1.34
Gold (\$)	285.05	-4.40	-1.5	298.35	240.00	1.57
Silver (\$)	5.67	-0.09	-1.6	7.09	4.00	1.57

TOURIST RATES

Country	Rate	Country	Rate
Australia (\$)	2.4530	Mexican (nuevo peso)	14.69
Austria (schillings)	19.36	Netherlands (guilder)	3.1021
Belgium (francs)	56.91	New Zealand (\$)	2.8851
Canada (\$)	2.3709	Norway (kroner)	12.17
Cyprus (pounds)	0.8145	Portugal (escudos)	281.04
Denmark (kroner)	10.53	Saudi Arabia (rials)	5.9235
Finland (markka)	8.3998	Singapore (\$)	2.6140
France (francs)	9.2480	South Africa (rand)	9.5889
Germany (marks)	2.7670	Spain (pesetas)	234.21
Greece (drachma)	455.08	Sweden (kronor)	12.57
Hong Kong (\$)	12.21	Switzerland (francs)	2.2598
Ireland (pounds)	1.1079	Thailand (bahts)	54.16
India (rupees)	62.13	Turkey (liras)	538302
Israel (shekels)	6.0844	USA (\$)	1.5881
Italy (lira)	2741		
Japan (yen)	186.38		
Malaysia (ringgits)	5.9088		
Malta (lira)	0.6105		

INFLATION



Source: ONS

RECORD FALL IN CLOTHES AND SHOE PRICES

Tom Craig

ONS TO CUT 1,000 JOBS

Lea Paterson

BOOTS' OPTION SCHEME

Nigel Cope

STOCKS ENDED A CHOPPY SESSION

Tom Craig

AROUND THE WORLD'S MARKETS

Tom Craig

LONDON

SHARES MOVED towards their all-time peak with Footsie closing 85.4 points higher at 5,108.6, just 70.4 from its July record. Supporting shares were firm.

Banks led the Footsie charge with Barclays, following results and a higher dividend, up 10p to 1,692p. Tobacco also made a big contribution, pushed up by the Government's decision to stop the National Health Service starting legal action to recover smoking related costs.

Derek Pain, page 21

NEW YORK

US STOCKS rose, helped by lower bond yields and unexpectedly strong earnings from Wal-Mart, the world's largest retailer.

The Dow Jones Industrial Average rose 75.44, or 0.8 per cent, to 9,348.26. The Standard & Poor's 500 Index gained 19.26, or 1.6 per cent, to 1,248.23. The Nasdaq Composite Index climbed 34.49, or 1.5 per cent, to 2,353.38. Eight stocks rose for every five that fell on the New York Stock Exchange.

TOKYO

TOKYO STOCKS rose for a fourth straight session as interest rates fell on news that the Ministry of Finance would resume buying government debt. The Nikkei 225 average rose 177.92 points or 1.37 per cent to end at 14,232.64. Nikkei March futures stood 200 higher at 14,230. Earlier in the day, the Finance Minister Kiichi Miyazawa said his ministry would begin buying government bonds from the secondary market later this month or in March, following a sharp drop in bond yields.

FRANKFURT

GERMANY'S benchmark Xetra DAX index ended barely higher yesterday in lacklustre carnival-season trade, supported by a robust start on Wall Street. The Xetra DAX closed up 6.16 points, or 0.13 per cent, at 4,895.11 points. In floor trading, the DAX climbed 25.13 points, or 0.52 per cent, to 4,904.68 points. Shares in Deutsche Bank ended 1.68 per cent higher at 48.85 euros after New York authorities withdrew objections to the bank's purchase of Bankers Trust.

PARIS

STOCKS ended a choppy session of diminished liquidity slightly lower. The CAC-40 index closed down 0.32 per cent at 4,052.32 in volume of 1.6 billion euros.

Eurotunnel closed 17.7 per cent higher on a combination of bid speculation combined with talk that the company may continue to buy back debt. Energy engineering group Technip rose 13.55 per cent after better than expected 1998 results and it forecast a 50 per cent increase in earnings per share within three years.

Wednesday 17 February 1965

[illegible][illegible]

Don't spend it all at once, Mr Brown

THE UK economy is changing out of all recognition. The Great Britain we all know and love is a high-inflation, high-unemployment nation, with a burgeoning budget deficit that doesn't go away, even in the good times. Over the past year or two, however, the economy has started to look disconcertingly different.

Inflation has been more or less at the Government's target for many months now. Employment is at a record high. And the public finances - as the latest set of figures show only too clearly - are in amazingly good shape. The Government's budget surplus hit a monthly record in January, leading some economists to predict a surplus for the year of more than £10bn. This is more than double the level forecast by the Treasury back in November, and leaves Gordon Brown looking exceedingly comfortable going into next month's Budget.



OUTLOOK

which reduces income tax receipts and boosts spending on unemployment benefit, can leave a large hole in the Government's numbers. Mr Brown's success with the public finances so far is a mixture of good management, good luck and good timing. Although the Chancellor deserves to be congratulated for keeping tight control of the public purse, and for his bold move to grant the Bank of England independence, he has received a helping hand from unexpected quarters.

growth peak in 1998 - it's all downhill from here. This all means Mr Brown should approach yesterday's public finance figures with care, and resist the temptation to loosen the purse strings too far in the Budget. The British economy is doing surprisingly well. It would be a terrible shame to put it in jeopardy.

Share options

SHAREHOLDER VALUE has long been a priority at Boots, and it rarely tires of lecturing all-comers on the subject - just don't mention Ward White, now eradicated from the record as if this destruction of value never happened. To this end, the company has scrapped share options for directors and replaced them with long-term bonuses based on total shareholder return. And at every results meeting Lord Blyth, the Boots chairman, gleefully flashes up a little table showing just how well Boots is performing against its peer group on this measure (share price performance plus dividend payments).

It has pushed out the envelope a little further. Yesterday's announcement that Boots will satisfy its obligations on staff share options by buying existing shares in the market rather than issuing new ones is the kind of subject only an accountant can get excited about. The main benefit is that buying in existing shares rather than issuing new ones means the value of current shares is not diluted. It also means that the scheme is consistent with Boots' policy of reducing the number of shares in circulation and thereby enhancing earnings. And it recognises that share options as a form of remuneration carry a real cost. They should not be treated as manna from heaven.

Boots will as a consequence take a \$63m hit to the bottom line this year and \$20m a year thereafter. The real cost of share options thus becomes disclosed and transparent. In most other schemes the cost of option payments is passed straight to the reserves and nobody bats an eyelid. This is seen as acceptable in the UK where the amount of staff compensation paid out in the form of options is fairly low.

the US, where nothing is done by halves. Many tech companies pay a high proportion of their wage bill in stock options, prompting growing concern about a potentially vast corporate liability which goes almost entirely unrecognised in accounting terms. The most oft-quoted example is Microsoft, which has created hundreds of Microsoft millionaires through the issue of options. The story goes that if Microsoft had recorded those as a cost to the profit and loss account, or paid them as salary, the business would have made a loss only a few years ago.

On this side of the Atlantic, the problem doesn't exist on anything like the same scale. That, of course, makes it a much easier one to deal with. Even so, full marks to Boots in grasping the nettle in this way.

Boardroom pay

BEING ESSENTIALLY a Glaswegian Liberal at heart, Tony Blair has always believed he ought to be able to rely on businessmen to lead by moral example and exercise restraint in the amount they pay themselves. Unfortunately it doesn't work that way in the modern world, if it ever did. Since Labour came to power, the pay dif-

ferential between those at the top of the pile and those at the bottom has continued to widen.

The boardrooms of Britain's largest companies increasingly feel it necessary to pay themselves according to global, generally American, benchmarks, and there has been a continued news flow of multi-million pound remuneration packages for senior executives. Barclays is having to pay Mike O'Neill an American style package of salary, options, shadow options and bonuses to persuade him to take the chief executive's job; he refused to come for any less.

So if executives cannot be relied upon to exercise restraint, what can the Government do about it? Like John Major, it could refuse offending businessmen their gong, but that doesn't seem to do the trick either. Nor can Labour, having fully converted to the cause of free market economics, realistically impose restraint centrally through Act of Parliament. Alternatively it could tax the rich more highly, but only the Lib Dems believe in doing that.

Instead, Stephen Byers, the Trade and Industry Secretary, is reported to be falling back on that old chestnut - obliging shareholders to do their duty. Such an approach is not entirely

without merit. Rarely do shareholders get an opportunity to vote directly on director's pay, and even when they do, the structure of share ownership in Britain, with control focused in the hands of a small number of highly paid fund managers, means their stance is often an apathetic one.

This could be remedied in two ways. Companies might be obliged through the listing requirements to put directors' remuneration to the vote on an annual basis, in the same way as they do with auditors' fees. Secondly, pension fund trustees might be obliged to exercise that vote - with abstention no longer an option. There is a general objection to be made to any form of legally imposed coercion, but even so, neither of these measures could be regarded as particularly contentious. But whether they would have what Mr Byers seems to regard as the required effect, is another thing. Nor is it clear that to put moral pressure on shareholders to reduce the salaries of their executive officers is in their own best interests. We can all point to examples of excess in the boardroom, but if the effect is to make British boardroom pay uncompetitive when set against the alternatives, then that would plainly be a bad thing.

EU raids eight banks in exchange rate probe

EIGHT of Europe's best known banks, including leaders in Germany, France, Italy and Spain were raided yesterday in a European Union-wide investigation into charges for exchanging notes and coins within the 11-nation eurozone. The European Commission said it also sent letters to banks in virtually all of the 11 nations demanding information on their tariffs. The move is the most dramatic evidence yet of concern in Brussels that consumers are not benefiting from one of the main selling points of the euro - the locking of exchange rates.

Karel van Miert, Europe's Competition Commissioner, was seeking evidence to support claims of collusion and anti-competitive behaviour among banks. Mr Van Miert told journalists that the banks raided were Deutsche Bank AG, Dresdner Bank AG, Credit Agricole, Societe Generale, Banca Commerciale Italiana, Cassa di Risparmio delle Province Lombarde SPA, Banco Bilbao Viz-



Karel van Miert, Europe's Competition Commissioner. Seeking evidence to support claims of collusion

caya SA and Argenta Bank of Spain SA. The commission added that the investigators were "not made especially welcome in some places", citing France as an example. Since January the commission had, he said, received indications that "some kind of concertation" was taking place, perhaps through national banking associations and at the European level.

Mr Van Miert added that he singled out the eight banks that were raided because "a choice had to be made" and there was a "likelihood" evidence would be found. Transaction charges have become especially controversial because the advent of the euro has ended the publication of different rates for buyers and sellers. Banks argue that the differential between the two rates allowed them to make a profit from the transaction - some-

thing that now has to be done solely through commission charges. However, investigations by members of the European Parliament suggest some commissions have been as high as 3.75 per cent. A Deutsche Bank spokesman admitted that two members of the commission's anti-trust committee and one representative of the German federal anti-trust office had paid the bank an "informational" visit.

"They inquired how we determine charges for exchanging national currencies and we provided information. There was no raid," a spokesman said. The spokesman also denied the allegation, saying there had not been collusion over the charges. "The setting of our 3 per cent surcharge for currency exchanges has been a normal decision-making process," he said. Banco Bilbao Vizcaya SA said it was confident it would be vindicated, adding that its commission charges were the minimum.

Voss Net catches Internet fever

VOSS NET, the AIM-listed electronic commerce group, has become the latest stock to catch Internet fever after the company announced an agreement to supply free Internet access to schools in Britain. Shares in the stock market tumbled in early trading before closing 21.5p higher at 65p on the agreement with Free Computers for Education, a registered charity. FCE collects unwanted computers from industry, refurbishes them and supplies them free to schools. Under the terms of yesterday's deal Voss Net has a four-year contract to supply schools with unlimited free Internet access under the FCE name. It will earn its income from a proportion of the telephone revenue generated from the Internet usage. FCE will also take a cut of the telephone

charges and will use the money to buy more computer equipment for schools. Voss Net said: "The provision of free Internet access will form an important element of the company's strategy going forwards." Free Internet access has become the latest trend in the small, but rapidly growing UK electronic commerce market. Duns was first with the launch in September of its FreeServe service which now has more than a million members. Tesco and last week BT have since followed suit and experts predict a wave of copycat launches. The providers waive the usual monthly subscription fee and make their money from the telephone charges and the call revenue while users are on-line.

IT breeds new multi-millionaires

A NEW batch of computer industry executives are set to become paper multi-millionaires later this year as the stock market rekindles its love affair with information technology stocks. Duncan McIntyre, the chief executive of Morse, is likely to be worth around £25m on paper when the computer distribution group joins the Stock Exchange in a £300m flotation later this year.

Meanwhile, Mark Hunter, the chief executive of the consultancy Axon, will see his shareholding valued at up to £30m. The firm, which specialises in implementing business software supplied by the German giant SAP, will be valued at £80m to £100m.

It has also emerged that the chief executive of Synstar, the desktop services and disaster recovery group, will pocket up to £7m from its flotation which will be valued at £250m to £300m. Richard Ferré is thought to have invested under £1m in the company 18 months ago when it was the subject of an £80m management buyout from Granada, the hotels and media giant.

The bonanza suggests that British investors are once again enthusiastic about information technology stocks. Shares in leading computer services companies have recovered this year after a serious wobble in the autumn of last year. However, the rash of flotations has revived accusations that the management and their venture capital backers are seeking to cash in ahead of an expected slowdown in demand for IT services later this year. Those fears were fuelled by the revelation that Synstar is facing potentially damaging compensation claims if its clients' computer systems fail as a result of the millennium bug.

IN BRIEF

Birds Eye Wall's creates 275 jobs
BIRDS EYE WALL'S, the UK-based ice-cream arm of Anglo-Dutch consumer products group Unilever, is to create more than 275 jobs in sales and distribution. The company said yesterday it was creating a new network of contracted out service providers under the "Wall's Direct" name, which will be fully operational from 1 March.

ICL set to win £500m PFI deal
CUSTOMS AND EXCISE has named a consortium led by ICL, the IT services company, as the preferred bidder to supply secure IT and telecoms services to HM Customs & Excise, in a private finance initiative deal expected to cost £500m over the next 10 years. The contract is expected to be awarded next spring.

Isle of Man unveils 15% company tax
THE ISLE OF MAN is to introduce a 15 per cent tax band from 1999/2000 for companies' first £100,000 of taxable income, the Manx treasury minister Richard Corliss, said in his budget yesterday. He added: "British ministers have constitutional statement to Europe, which indicates it would be unprecedented for the UK government to interfere with our domestic legislation, which includes taxation."

Business Direct Interest Rates Change

With effect from Tuesday 16th February 1999
The Co-operative Bank Business Direct Account
Credit Interest will be as follows:

Balance	Gross AER%	Gross %	Net AER%	Net %
£2,000+	0.87	0.87	0.70	0.70
£25,000+	1.51	1.50	1.20	1.20
£100,000+	2.52	2.50	2.01	2.00
£250,000+	4.59	4.50	3.65	3.60

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7 Gender Prop	7.5	0.0	-	4070
16 Gender Int	207.5	+ 0.0	3.5	12.4 2221

1998, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024, 2025, 2026, 2027, 2028, 2029, 2030, 2031, 2032, 2033, 2034, 2035, 2036, 2037, 2038, 2039, 2040, 2041, 2042, 2043, 2044, 2045, 2046, 2047, 2048, 2049, 2050, 2051, 2052, 2053, 2054, 2055, 2056, 2057, 2058, 2059, 2060, 2061, 2062, 2063, 2064, 2065, 2066, 2067, 2068, 2069, 2070, 2071, 2072, 2073, 2074, 2075, 2076, 2077, 2078, 2079, 2080, 2081, 2082, 2083, 2084, 2085, 2086, 2087, 2088, 2089, 2090, 2091, 2092, 2093, 2094, 2095, 2096, 2097, 2098, 2099, 2100, 2101, 2102, 2103, 2104, 2105, 2106, 2107, 2108, 2109, 2110, 2111, 2112, 2113, 2114, 2115, 2116, 2117, 2118, 2119, 2120, 2121, 2122, 2123, 2124, 2125, 2126, 2127, 2128, 2129, 2130, 2131, 2132, 2133, 2134, 2135, 2136, 2137, 2138, 2139, 2140, 2141, 2142, 2143, 2144, 2145, 2146, 2147, 2148, 2149, 2150, 2151, 2152, 2153, 2154, 2155, 2156, 2157, 2158, 2159, 2160, 2161, 2162, 2163, 2164, 2165, 2166, 2167, 2168, 2169, 2170, 2171, 2172, 2173, 2174, 2175, 2176, 2177, 2178, 2179, 2180, 2181, 2182, 2183, 2184, 2185, 2186, 2187, 2188, 2189, 2190, 2191, 2192, 2193, 2194, 2195, 2196, 2197, 2198, 2199, 2200, 2201, 2202, 2203, 2204, 2205, 2206, 2207, 2208, 2209, 2210, 2211, 2212, 2213, 2214, 2215, 2216, 2217, 2218, 2219, 2220, 2221, 2222, 2223, 2224, 2225, 2226, 2227, 2228, 2229, 2230, 2231, 2232, 2233, 2234, 2235, 2236, 2237, 2238, 2239, 2240, 2241, 2242, 2243, 2244, 2245, 2246, 2247, 2248, 2249, 2250, 2251, 2252, 2253, 2254, 2255, 2256, 2257, 2258, 2259, 2260, 2261, 2262, 2263, 2264, 2265, 2266, 2267, 2268, 2269, 2270, 2271, 2272, 2273, 2274, 2275, 2276, 2277, 2278, 2279, 2280, 2281, 2282, 2283, 2284, 2285, 2286, 2287, 2288, 2289, 2290, 2291, 2292, 2293, 2294, 2295, 2296, 2297, 2298, 2299, 2300, 2301, 2302, 2303, 2304, 2305, 2306, 2307, 2308, 2309, 2310, 2311, 2312, 2313, 2314, 2315, 2316, 2317, 2318, 2319, 2320, 2321, 2322, 2323, 2324, 2325, 2326, 2327, 2328, 2329, 2330, 2331, 2332, 2333, 2334, 2335, 2336, 2337, 2338, 2339, 2340, 2341, 2342, 2343, 2344, 2345, 2346, 2347, 2348, 2349, 2350, 2351, 2352, 2353, 2354, 2355, 2356, 2357, 2358, 2359, 2360, 2361, 2362, 2363, 2364, 2365, 2366, 2367, 2368, 2369, 2370, 2371, 2372, 2373, 2374, 2375, 2376, 2377, 2378, 2379, 2380, 2381, 2382, 2383, 2384, 2385, 2386, 2387, 2388, 2389, 2390, 2391, 2392, 2393, 2394, 2395, 2396, 2397, 2398, 2399, 2400, 2401, 2402, 2403, 2404, 2405, 2406, 2407, 2408, 2409, 2410, 2411, 2412, 2413, 2414, 2415, 2416, 2417, 2418, 2419, 2420, 2421, 2422, 2423, 2424, 2425, 2426, 2427, 2428, 2429, 2430, 2431, 2432, 2433, 2434, 2435, 2436, 2437, 2438, 2439, 2440, 2441, 2442, 2443, 2444, 2445, 2446, 2447, 2448, 2449, 2450, 2451, 2452, 2453, 2454, 2455, 2456, 2457, 2458, 2459, 2460, 2461, 2462, 2463, 2464, 2465, 2466, 2467, 2468, 2469, 2470, 2471, 2472, 2473, 2474, 2475, 2476, 2477, 2478, 2479, 2480, 2481, 2482, 2483, 2484, 2485, 2486, 2487, 2488, 2489, 2490, 2491, 2492, 2493, 2494, 2495, 2496, 2497, 2498, 2499, 2500, 2501, 2502, 2503, 2504, 2505, 2506, 2507, 2508, 2509, 2510, 2511, 2512, 2513, 2514, 2515, 2516, 2517, 2518, 2519, 2520, 2521, 2522, 2523, 2524, 2525, 2526, 2527, 2528, 2529, 2530, 2531, 2532, 2533, 2534, 2535, 2536, 2537, 2538, 2539, 2540, 2541, 2542, 2543, 2544, 2545, 2546, 2547, 2548, 2549, 2550, 2551, 2552, 2553, 2554, 2555, 2556, 2557, 2558, 2559, 2560, 2561, 2562, 2563, 2564, 2565, 2566, 2567, 2568, 2569, 2570, 2571, 2572, 2573, 2574, 2575, 2576, 2577, 2578, 2579, 2580, 2581, 2582, 2583, 2584, 2585, 2586, 2587, 2588, 2589, 2590, 2591, 2592, 2593, 2594, 2595, 2596, 2597, 2598, 2599, 2600, 2601, 2602, 2603, 2604, 2605, 2606, 2607, 2608, 2609, 2610, 2611, 2612, 2613, 2614, 2615, 2616, 2617, 2618, 2619, 2620, 2621, 2622, 2623, 2624, 2625, 2626, 2627, 2628, 2629, 2630, 2631, 2632, 2633, 2634, 2635, 2636, 2637, 2638, 2639, 2640, 2641, 2642, 2643, 2644, 2645, 2646, 2647, 2648, 2649, 2650, 2651, 2652, 2653, 2654, 2655, 2656, 2657, 2658, 2659, 2660, 2661, 2662, 2663, 2664, 2665, 2666, 2667, 2668, 2669, 2670, 2671, 2672, 2673, 2674, 2675, 2676, 2677, 2678, 2679, 26

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FOR THE RECORD

FROM THE EDITOR

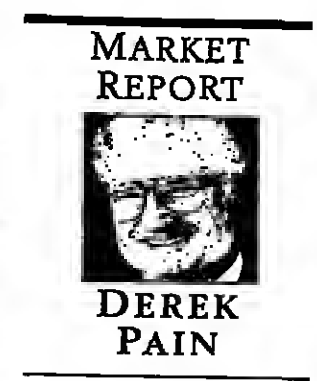
Banks edge Footsie towards all-time high

ONCE AGAIN Footsie inched towards its all-time high, climbing 85.4 points to 6,108.8. Since peaking at 6,179 in July, the index has made more than half-a-dozen attempts to establish a new top.

But although it managed a trading high last month it has found it impossible to strike a new closing record. Banks, helped along by Barclays, were behind the latest advance.

Barclays rose 102p to 1,882p and National Westminster Bank 97p to 1,379p. Bank of Scotland was 36p higher at 909.5p and Woolwich 17.5p at 365.5p. The stock market latched on to Barclays' increased dividend. With interest rates falling, higher dividend payments are achieving even greater significance than in the past.

There is also the growing possibility of takeover action among the banking community. Last week Lloyds TSB, up 22p to 904.5p, displayed its acquisitive inclinations and although Barclays will, at least for the time being, mark time



DEREK PAIN

the most heavily traded with a trading volume of 24.1 million. Supporting shares were firm. The mid cap index rose 23.7 to 5,204.9 and the small cap 7.5 to 2,248.1.

Catell, the consumer credit group, underlined the widespread appeal of financials, scoring a 13p gain to a peak of 759.5p. Year's results are due next month. They are expected to come out at around £48m, against the £55.1m achieved in the previous year.

Amvescap, the fund manager, was the best performing Footsie constituent, gaining 44.5p to 607.5p.

Sachs has been appointed to explore the options available to the telecom business. The market expects Scottish Power to go for a flotation.

Rolls-Royce was ruffled by stories of increased competition from General Electric of the US, which is thought to be trying to squeeze the British group's engines out of some Boeing aircraft. The GE rumour overshadowed a £150m engine contract from British Aerospace.

Engineer Haden Maclellan rose 5p to 44.5p, a partial recovery from Monday's profit warning. Alstom, which is trying to restore the stock market's faith in the company after an indifferent performance in previous years, was up 1.5p to 125.0p. The company pointed to booming demand from mobile phone operators for IT systems as one of the reasons for its growth. Sema reckons it has 16 per cent of this fast-growing market, making it the leader ahead of rivals such as Logica.

In the past year, Sema has established its credentials as a competitor for large contracts by winning the five-year deal to handle the Benefits Agency's medical services systems. Last year it won a contract to oversee all IT systems for the Olympic Games from 2002 to 2008.

Pierre Bonelli, Sema's chief executive, said 1998 was an "in-

Profits rise puts Sema back in the market's good books

BY PETER THAL LARSEN

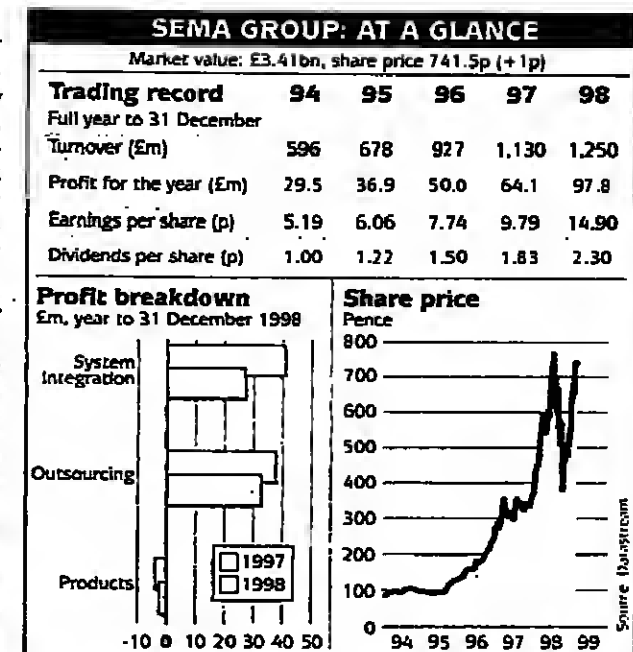
SEMA, THE Anglo-French computer services group, yesterday moved to re-establish its growth credentials when it reported a sharp rise in pre-tax profits and stressed its exposure to the fast-growing areas of mobile telephony and electronic commerce.

In the year to December, Sema made a pre-tax profit of £97.8m on revenues of £1.25bn. However, the figures were distorted by the sale in July of BAE Sema, its defence systems joint venture, to British Aerospace. On an underlying basis, profits grew by 31 per cent while turnover rose 21 per cent.

The figures went some way to restoring the stock market's faith in Sema after an indifferent performance in previous years. The company pointed to booming demand from mobile phone operators for IT systems as one of the reasons for its growth. Sema reckons it has 16 per cent of this fast-growing market, making it the leader ahead of rivals such as Logica.

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Pierre Bonelli, Sema's chief executive, said 1998 was an "in-



Pierre Bonelli: Sema "reshaped itself" last year

tense and pivotal year" in which the company "has reshaped itself to concentrate on its chosen high-growth markets and to continue to exploit its unique position as a provider of a complete range of services".

But analysts said Sema still had some way to go before it could truly measure itself against the US giants of the computer services industry such as IBM and EDS. They said the company still does not have a significant presence in the United States, even though it suggests

much more risky and, on the back of this, investors might start reviewing their portfolio.

Nevertheless, most analysts yesterday upgraded their profit forecasts for 1999 to about £55m, reflecting the expected growth in telecoms and the potential benefits of Sema's joint venture with Broadvision, the US e-commerce software supplier. Most observers rate the shares, which edged up 1p to 741.5p yesterday after a strong run in recent months, a solid hold.

STEPHEN DEAN has sold most of his shares in Environmental Property Services.

A 29.6 per cent stake has been picked up at 9.5p a share by investors led by Lupus Associates, where Charles Ryder, formerly of Magellan Industries, is a leading light.

Mr Dean intends to concentrate on his other business, Artisan (UK), which split from EPS last year.

EPS held at 9.75p and Artisan edged ahead 0.25p to 4.75p.

until new chief executive Michael O'Neill gets his feet under the boardroom table, the group will not ignore future consolidation.

Mergers between clearing and mortgage banks are thought to be the most likely development although more cross border deals are also expected.

Allied Irish Banks is regarded by many as the next bank to fall to a bid, with Lloyds now the favourite to strike. The shares have had a volatile run and rose 30.5p to 1,132.5p in brisk trading.

New York's early strength was a positive influence and there were also hopes that perhaps Tokyo's despair is coming to an end.

The banking excitement helped swell trading volume back above 1 billion shares with Centrica, the gas group,

Environmental Property Services.

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The banking excitement helped swell trading volume back above 1 billion shares with Centrica, the gas group,

Low & Bonar tipped for takeover

BY NIGEL COPE

Associate City Editor

LOW & BONAR was tipped as a potential takeover target yesterday after shares in the packaging group fell 11 per cent due to a fall in underlying profits for the full year and a cautious statement on current trading.

Analysts said American predators, which are already circling rival Field Group, might be attracted by Low & Bonar's lowly valuation.

The shares, which closed 15p lower at 185p yesterday, currently trade on a forward multiple of just 6 and yield over 10 per cent. Analysts questioned whether the dividend

might be cut this year although management pledged to maintain the pay-out which is currently 1.2 times covered before exceptional charges.

"We have no intention of cutting the dividend. We just felt it was prudent to maintain the second half pay-out," said Jim Heilig, chief executive of Low & Bonar.

Low & Bonar has been hit by a series of problems in its major markets following the £87.5m acquisition of Wadding-

ton cartoons last autumn. Its packaging operations have been affected by both an influx of lower priced imports from mainland Europe while the economic crisis in the Far East has led to further over-capacity in Europe while cutting demand for its specialist materials products.

Underlying profits were lower than expected at £46.2m. However, the group plunged to a pre-tax loss of £3.3m after more than £50m of exceptional and re-organisational charges.

This includes £40m to cover the cost of closure of a plant in Manchester, which serves Kellogg's, and £9.5m of integration costs relating to the Waddington deal which will yield annual savings of £5m.

Under Mr Heilig, Low & Bonar has striven to achieve organic growth and is also shifting the balance of its sales towards higher margin business and away from low price packaging.

Heated time for receivers

WE'VE ALL heard of accountants "cooking the books", however I doubt if many people have heard of a recent House of Lords proposal that receivers should be microwaved.

On 26 January the House of Lords debated a motion to end the practice where an investigating accountant sent in to help a troubled company is subsequently appointed its receiver.

In support of the motion, Lord Montague of Oxford pointed out that "a Chinese wall is like a Chinese wall. One takes it home and puts it in a microwave. I suggest to noble lords that many of the receivers should be dealt with in a similar way".

Ken Baird, a partner with City law firm Freshfields, who passed on this snippet, added: "Possibly this is more of an argument for reform of the upper chamber than for reform of the Insolvency Act 1986".

PEOPLE AND BUSINESS

BY JOHN WILLCOCK

Footy saviours

THERE'S CERTAINLY no excuse for wanting to microwave Tom Burton and John Ariel, administrators of Portsmouth Football Club, who are working hard to find a new backer for the troubled side.

The recovery specialists from accountants Kidsons Impey were sent in at the beginning of the month to sort out the finances of "Pompey", as the south-coast club is called.

Messrs Burton and Ariel have quite a track record in rescuing footy clubs. They got a taste of it carrying out the restructuring of Brighton & Hove Albion in 1982. But they claim the receivership of Gillingham FC in 1985 as their best performance



created SG Paribas - thus returning the Swiss-owned investment bank to its original name of SG Warburg.

The bank was named after its founder Sigmund Warburg, a German refugee who built the bank into a global force in the 1950s and '60s. In the 1990s it was gobbled up by SBC to become SBC Warburg. The merger with Dillon Read in the US followed to create SBC Warburg Dillon Read. Then the merger last year with UBS created Warburg Dillon Read. Whatever happens, this must cost a fortune in new stationery.

IT's Laphorne

MORSE, THE IT services company, has announced its intention to float and has appointed a heavyweight non-executive chairman, Richard Laphorne, to help it cause. Mr Laphorne is finance director and vice chairman of British Aerospace, and has a clutch of other non-exec directorships, including Nycomed Amersham, Orange and Robert Fleming.

E-mail: j.willcock@independent.co.uk

COMPANY RESULTS

Name	Turnover (£)	Pre-tax (£)	Dividend	Pay day	X-div
Barclays (F)	107,840 (95.28m)	1,918 (1,758)	45p (74.4p)	30.04.99	22.02.99
Nat West (F)	121,586 (95.28m)	1,306 (1,130)	150p (1.75p)	30.04.99	22.02.99
Bank of Scot (F)	107,840 (95.28m)	1,306 (1,130)	2.4p (2.1p)	04.05.99	22.02.99
Woolwich (F)	107,840 (95.28m)	1,306 (1,130)	8.8p (8.4p)	23.04.99	22.02.99
Centrica (F)	107,840 (95.28m)	1,306 (1,130)	150p (1.75p)	30.04.99	22.02.99
Low & Bonar (F)	107,840 (95.28m)	1,306 (1,130)	10p (10.2p)	25.04.99	22.02.99
Micro (F)	107,840 (95.28m)	1,306 (1,130)	8.50p (5.25p)	14.04.99	22.02.99
Morgan Stanley (F)	107,840 (95.28m)	1,306 (1,130)	0.75p (1p)	08.04.99	15.03.99
British Telecom (F)	107,840 (95.28m)	1,306 (1,130)	5.80p (5.80p)	05.04.99	05.03.99
Paterson Zochell (F)	107,840 (95.28m)	1,306 (1,130)	4.5p (1p)	05.05.99	22.02.99
Quintis Group (F)	107,840 (95.28m)	1,306 (1,130)	0.05p (1p)	08.04.99	08.03.99
Range Computer (F)	107,840 (95.28m)	1,306 (1,130)	2.5p (1.83p)	01.07.99	01.06.99
Soma Group (F)	107,840 (95.28m)	1,306 (1,130)	3.5p (3.0p)	22.02.99	22.02.99
St. Modwen Properties (F)	107,840 (95.28m)	1,306 (1,130)	3.5p (3.0p)	22.02.99	22.02.99

SEMA VOLUME: 10.8bn
SEMA TRADING: £3,374
GILTS: 114.67 +0.48

FOREIGN EXCHANGE RATES

Country	1 month	3 month	6 month	1 year
UK	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000
Australia	2.5595	2.5595	2.5595	2.5595
Canada	2.0000	2.0000	2.0000	2.0000
France	6.5595	6.5595	6.5595	6.5595
Germany	1.9364	1.9364	1.9364	1.9364
Italy	1.9364	1.9364	1.9364	1.9364
Japan	163.26	163.26	163.26	163.26
Netherlands	2.2037	2.2037	2.2037	2.2037
New Zealand	1.5595	1.5595	1.5595	1.5595
Portugal	204.48	204.48	204.48	204.48
Spain	166.36	166.36	166.36	166.36
Sweden	8.4664	8.4664	8.4664	8.4664
Switzerland	1.4548	1.4548	1.4548	1.4548
US	1.6330	1.6330	1.6330	1.6330

INTEREST RATES

Country	1 month	3 month	6 month	1 year
UK	5.50%	5.50%	5.50%	5.50%
US	5.50%	5.50%	5.50%	5.50%
Germany	5.50%	5.50%	5.50%	5.50%
France	5.50%	5.50%	5.50%	5.50%
Italy	5.50%	5.50%	5.50%	5.50%
Japan	5.50%	5.50%	5.50%	5.50%
Netherlands	5.50%	5.50%	5.50%	5.50%
New Zealand	5.50%	5.50%	5.50%	5.50%
Portugal	5.50%	5.50%	5.50%	5.50%
Spain	5.50%	5.50%	5.50%	5.50%
Sweden	5.50%	5.50%	5.50%	5.50%
Switzerland	5.50%	5.50%	5.50%	5.50%
US	5.50%	5.50%	5.50%	5.50%

LIFFE FINANCIAL FUTURES

Contract	Mar-99	Apr-99	May-99	Jun-99
Long Gilt	117.12	117.45	116.82	117.13
Short Gilt	117.12	117.45	116.82	117.13
German Bund	113.38	113.69	113.28	113.69
Italian Bond	113.40	113.69	113.28	113.69
Japan Govd	113.40	113.69	113.28	113.69
3 Mth Sterling	94.56	94.71	94.05	94.56
3 Mth Euro	94.56	94.71	94.05	94.56
3 Mth Euro Libor	94.56	94.71	94.05	94.56
FTSE 100	6110.00	6129.00	6055.00	6129.00

INDUSTRIAL METALS

Contract	Mar-99	Apr-99	May-99	Jun-99
Aluminum HG	1165.5	1164.5	1165.5	1165.5
Aluminum Alloy	1010	1015	1010	1010
Copper A	1392	1393	1392	1392
Lead	521	521	521	521
Nickel	4410	4420	4400	4400
Tin	5165	5175	5165	5165
Zinc	1009	1010	1009	1009

OTHER SPOT RATES

Country	1 month	3 month	6 month	1 year
UK	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000
Australia	2.5595	2.5595	2.5595	2.5595
Canada	2.0000	2.0000	2.0000	2.0000
France	6.5595	6.5595	6.5595	6.5595
Germany	1.9364	1.9364	1.9364	1.9364
Italy	1.9364	1.9364	1.9364	1.9364
Japan	163.26	163.26	163.26	163.26
Netherlands	2.2037	2.2037	2.2037	2.2037
New Zealand	1.5595	1.5595	1.5595	1.5595
Portugal	204.48	204.48	204.48	204.48
Spain	166.36	166.36	166.36	166.36
Sweden	8.4664	8.4664	8.4664	8.4664
Switzerland	1.4548	1.4548	1.4548	1.4548
US	1.6330	1.6330	1.6330	1.6330

MONEY MARKET RATES

Contract	Mar-99	Apr-99	May-99	Jun-99
Long Gilt	117.12	117.45	116.82	117.13
Short Gilt	117.12	117.45	116.82	117.13
German Bund	113.38	113.69	113.28	113.69
Italian Bond	113.40	113.69	113.28	113.69
Japan Govd	113.40	113.69	113.28	113.69
3 Mth Sterling	94.56	94.71	94.05	94.56
3 Mth Euro	94.56	94.71	94.05	94.56
3 Mth Euro Libor	94.56	94.71	94.05	94.56
FTSE 100	6110.00	6129.00	6055.00	6129.00

LIFFE FTSE 100 INDEX OPTION

Contract	Mar-99	Apr-99	May-99	Jun-99
Long Gilt	117.12	117.45	116.82	117.13
Short Gilt	117.12	117.45	116.82	117.13
German Bund	113.38	113.69	113.28	113.69
Italian Bond	113.40	113.69	113.28	113.69
Japan Govd	113.40	113.69	113.28	113.69
3 Mth Sterling	94.56	94.71	94.05	94.56
3 Mth Euro	94.56	94.71	94.05	94.56
3 Mth Euro Libor	94.56	94.71	94.05	94.56
FTSE 100	6110.00	6129.00	6055.00	6129.00

AGRICULTURAL AT 5.00PM

Contract	Mar-99	Apr-99	May-99	Jun-99
Aluminum HG	1165.5	1164.5	1165.5	1165.5
Aluminum Alloy	1010	1015	1010	1010
Copper A	1392	1393	1392	1392
Lead	521	521	521	521
Nickel	4410	4420	4400	4400
Tin	5165	5175	5165	5165
Zinc	1009	1010	1009	1009

SPORT

'I like Giggs and Beckham. And I think the lad at Arsenal, Overmars, is a good two-footed player, very similar to what I was'

Sir Tom the pride of Preston

WHILE I wait for Sir Tom Finney to arrive, the receptionist at Preston North End's Deepdale football ground tells me that a stretch of Deepdale Road - from the Territorial Army building to just past Sainsbury's - has recently been renamed Sir Tom Finney Way. She then asks if I would like to contribute to a fund to raise money for a statue of Sir Tom Finney. At this point, Sir Tom Finney arrives, having safely negotiated Sir Tom Finney Way, and graciously agrees to pose for the Independent's photographer in front of the Tom Finney stand.

A master of understatement might say that Preston is rather proud of Sir Tom Finney. When his knighthood was announced last year, the *Lancashire Evening Post* printed a 48-page tribute. And North End's deputy chairman was not being over-sentimental when he said "for the town's senior citizens, it is the news they've been waiting for for many a year."

The object of this veneration is a spry 76-year-old with a kindly pink face and snow-white hair, a little plumper than the 10-stone wall who left defenders kicking air and was described by no less a judge than Bill Shankly - who played alongside him in the Preston team between 1946 and 1949 - as "probably the greatest footballer who will ever be born." The story goes that when George Best was at his peak, Shankly was asked if he thought Best was a better player than Finney. "Aye he is, just about," growled Shankly. "But don't forget that Tom is 50-odd."

It seems incongruous, in a way, that such a homely, unassuming man should have inspired so many cracking after-dinner anecdotes, one of the best of which is told by another old Preston team-mate, Tommy Docherty. When I remind him of it, Finney chuckles.

"That one's quite true," he says. "Tommy came down from Celtic, and had a fairly good season with us. In those days we used to line up in the corridor before going in to the manager to find out our terms for the following year. I went in to see Bill Scott, the manager, and he said I'd be on the same terms as the year before, £12 a week during the season, and £10 a week in the summer, which was known as 12-and-10. Tommy went in after me, and was told he'd be on 12-and-eight. I'm not signing," he said. 'I've just found out that Finney's on 12-and-10'. The manager couldn't believe it. 'But Finney's a far better player than you', he said. 'Not in the bloody summer he's not', Tommy said."

Tom Finney grew up in a council house near Deepdale, and first dis-



THE BRIAN VINER INTERVIEW

played his sublime skills in 30-a-side kickabouts on a potholed patch of waste ground. His father, an electricity board clerk, had him apprenticed to a firm of plumbers when he was 14. The following year, Preston North End invited him to join the ground staff, but his father said he had to finish his apprenticeship first. He was devastated, but the old man was right. Tom Finney Ltd, set up just after the war, eventually employed 60 staff, and has given Finney - who hung up his boots in 1960, the year before football's £20-a-week maximum wage was abolished - a comfortable retirement.

He finally joined the Preston

'I've never played against such a good side. We lost 7-1 and it was racehorses against carthorses'

ground staff in 1937, and was inside left in the under-18 team until one fateful day when he stood in for the injured outside-right and played a blinder. When Preston won the 1940-41 FA Cup final against Arsenal - a victory wiped from the official records by the war - Finney was on the right wing, tormenting the Arsenal and England captain and full-back, Eddie Hapgood. A year later he was conscripted into the army.

"I was stationed at Catterick, and actually played seven or eight games with Newcastle, who got fantastic gates of 40,000-odd even in wartime. I also played a game or two for Southampton when I was down at Tidworth. With players moving all over the show in the forces, you used to approach the nearest club and say 'any chance of a game?' sort of thing. When I came home on leave, I'd get a game for Preston, although

the ground here was a prisoner-of-war camp so we had to play at the Leyland Motors ground.

"Then I was posted overseas for three years, and played in Italy with the Eighth Army team. It was a very strong side. We had Stan Cullis at centre-half, and Bryn Jones, who'd been sold for a record fee to Arsenal just before the war, and I remember we played the Polish XI and the RAF XI. In Egypt I played with The Wanderers who had some very good games against King Farouk's XI, which was quite an eye-opener because one or two of them played in bare feet with bandages round their ankles."

In 1947, the England manager, Walter Winterbottom, experimented by moving Finney to outside-left. If Glenn Hoddle's experiments had worked half as spectacularly, he could have claimed to be the reincarnation of John the Baptist and still retained public support. For with Finney on the left wing and Stanley Matthews on the right, England went to Portugal and won 10-0.

Over the next few years, a debate raged in the nation's pubs - was Finney better than Matthews? As with Arnold Palmer and Jack Nicklaus in another sport, the consensus now seems to be that Matthews had more charisma, but Finney was the better player. At the time, the press stoked up the debate into a bitter personal rivalry, which Finney robustly denies. "No, no. We were friends, me and Stan. We travelled down to England games together. And he called to congratulate me when I got the knighthood."

Both men were playing in April 1948 when England beat Scotland 2-0 in front of 130,000 at Hampden Park and Finney scored what he considers to be his most memorable goal, a screamer from the edge of the area. And they were both playing the following month when England went to Turin and overwhelmed Italy, the World Cup holders, 4-0. But Matthews was absent in April 1952, when England held Italy 1-1 in Florence. Finney sparked that day, and afterwards received a message that the president of the Sicilian club Palermo wanted to see him.

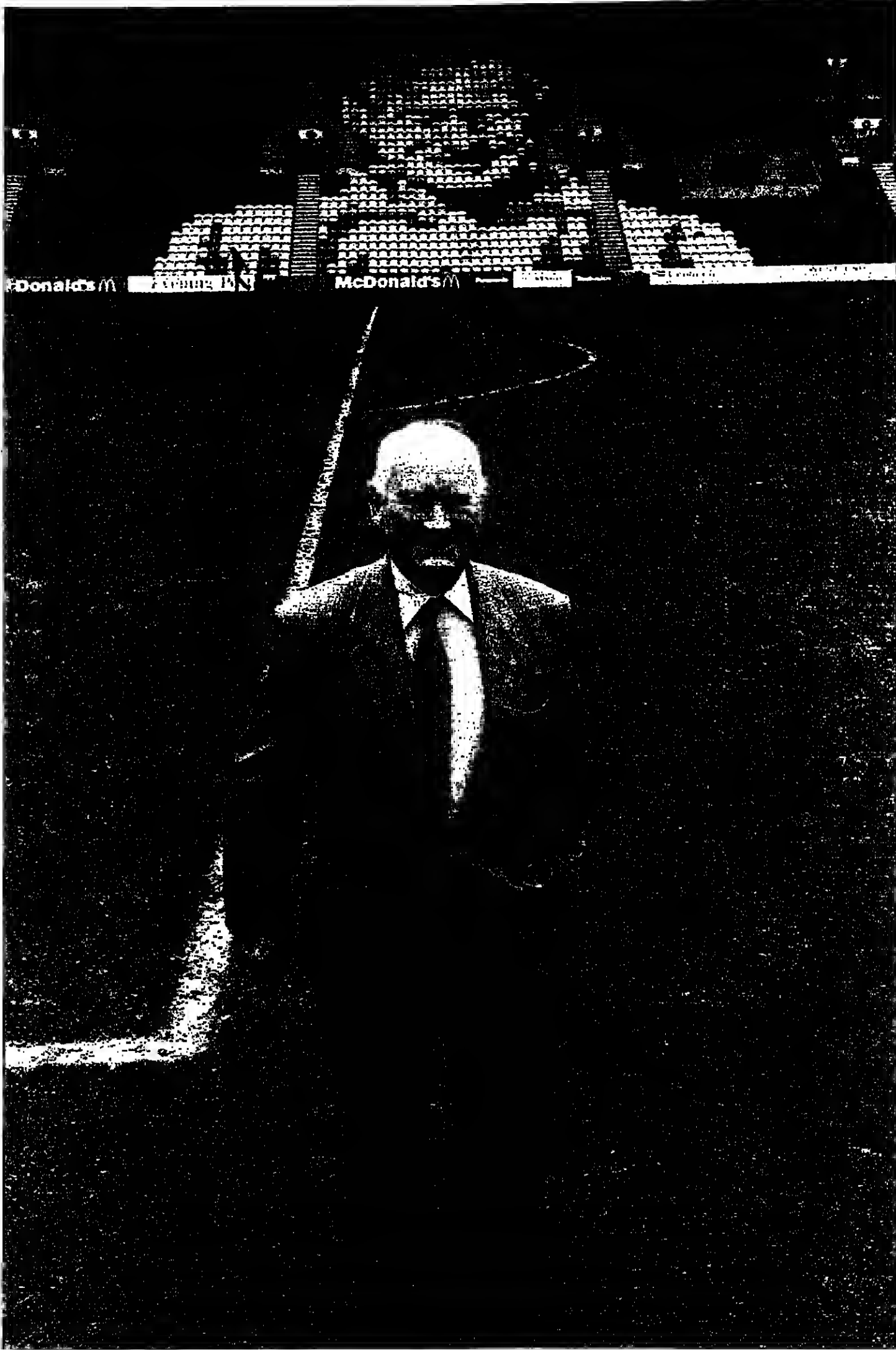
"He offered me a £10,000 signing-on fee, £120 a week, a house and a car. I was on £14 a week at the time, and I must say I was very tempted. My room-mate Ivor Broadis couldn't believe his ears. I came home and told the chairman of Preston, a man called Nat Buck, who was in the building trade and had a broad Lancashire accent. He said 'I'll tell thee now, if tha doesn't play for us, tha doesn't play for anyone.' And that was the end of it. A year or so after, John Charles moved over there. He was the first. But my kids were young and it would have caused a lot of problems. I've never regretted it."

Eighteen months later, Finney was injured for what was to be a historic meeting with Hungary. England had never lost at Wembley, and their 6-3 trouncing had seismic reverberations in the English game. Finney remembers the occasion well.

"The Hungarians came out 20 minutes before to warm up - we'd never seen that before. The little fellow Puskas was doing all sorts of fancy things with the ball, balancing it on his back and whatnot. They played with a deep-lying centre-forward and we'd never seen that either. Manchester City went and copied it with Don Revie as a deep-lying centre-forward and he caused all sorts of problems. Oh yes. It was a shock to some people to find we were not only not the best team in the world, we weren't even the best team in Europe. We started questioning the 2-3-5 formation, which we'd always taken for granted."

Finney was fit for the return match in Budapest. "I've never played against such a good side. We lost 7-1 and it was racehorses against carthorses. It was quite a nice day and Ivor Broadis said it was the first time he'd ever had a sunburnt tongue, because he spent all afternoon haring up and down with his tongue hanging out."

If the 1953 Hungarians were the greatest team Finney ever encountered, who was the greatest player he ever saw? He doesn't hesitate. "The player I have admired more than any other was Di Stefano from Real Madrid." And what about the modern game? "I like Giggs and



From plumber to the grand knight of Deepdale: Sir Tom poses in front of the Tom Finney Stand

Peter Jay

Beckham very much. And I think the lad at Arsenal, Overmars, is a good two-footed player, a very, very similar player to what I was. But I am saddened that the game is not as wide as it was. The number of times I see a man shape up to take a fella on, then give a pass inside. We used to love one-on-one situations, with only one man to get past. When it happens these days, the commentator goes on as if he's just seen a Martian. Giggs goes past people, and McManaman used to, but I do think pace was used better in our day."

Whether or not Finney is right, it is a sobering thought that he earned less in an entire career than some inferior players now earn in a week. You have to take account of more than inflation to get from £20 a week in 1959 to £30,000 a week in 1999. But characteristically, he expresses no bitterness. "The only thing that disappoints me is that players don't seem to honour contracts any more," he says.

In peacetime, Finney only once played for a British club other than Preston. In 1963, he was tempted out of retirement by George Eastham, manager of the Northern Ireland side, Distillery, who had been drawn in the European Cup against mighty Benfica. With 41-year-old Finney at centre-forward, Distillery held Benfica - including the great Eusebio - to a remarkable 3-3 draw. "I played fairly well," recalls Finney. "I went over an hour, this is as near as he gets to boasting. And yet, as I watch him climb into his car and rejoin the traffic on Sir Tom Finney Way, I reflect that there is nobody in football with more to boast about."



Nottingham Forest's Geoff Thomas has a tough assignment as Tom Finney shows his ball skills down Preston's left wing

Replay weakens referee's rule

Sir: With good common sense, Arsene Wenger called for the Arsenal versus Sheffield Utd FA Cup tie to be replayed. The argument was based on the unwritten rule of gentlemanly conduct, which by definition, has no definition.

But what of an earlier tie, between Oxford and Chelsea? Vialli dived his way to a stoppage-time penalty, thereby rescuing his team from defeat. Does this not also constitute gentlemanly conduct?

It seems that the Football Association has set a precedent. Any team suffering from a controversial decision will justifiably point to this game and ask for a replay. We are then at the mercy of the after-game honesty of managers and players. And where does this leave the referee?

GARY JACOB
St Catherine's College
Oxford

Whistlers turn to whining

Sir: How depressing and predictable that referees should whine about their powerlessness to disallow that Arsenal "goal". Everyone knew the goal should not have been allowed and the referee should have used some initiative and common sense and ruled it out. I would have thought that unwritten rules could be enforced using unwritten powers. Any referee with a real feeling for the game would have used them.

Falling that, the referee as the sole arbiter of fact could have ruled the throw-in a foul, or the scorer off-side, or deemed that the ball never

crossed the line. In fact I am surprised that this solution didn't occur to him, as referees seem quite happy to defy objective reality on other occasions.

Replaying the game is preferable to allowing the result to stand, but it would have been a lot better if the referee, players, and management had done their duty and sorted things out at the time.

BILL TRUMBLE
Oxford

Blame Overmars

Sir: I am a totally committed Man United supporter, but I still agree that Arsene Wenger deserves respect and admiration for his replay offer. How-

ever, I am amazed that all the attention has been focused on Nwankwo Kanu and the constant pleas that he did not realise what the convention is in England. What about Overmars? Why has no report I have seen or heard mentioned him?

Does he not know the convention of the game here? Has he just arrived? Even if we accept that Kanu does not know what should be done in such circumstances (which I find hard to believe), I am totally amazed that Overmars has not been roundly criticised for his part in the fiasco.

All he had to do was stop. That would have sorted the whole mess out, and ensured that the replay offer was not required. However he

played on and now must surely take the responsibility for causing this situation.

JEREMY GRAY
London SW20

Nothing new under the sun

Sir: The decision that the FA Cup game between Arsenal and Sheffield United should be played again is not unprecedented. Back in 1887 the fifth-round match between West Bromwich Albion and Lockwood Bros ended 1-0, but there was a dispute over the goal so the game was replayed at a neutral venue.

KEN FOX Leeds LS6

England in need of an overhaul

Sir: Last Wednesday's international with France dispelled the myth that "We would have won the World Cup" and it is not too difficult to see where England's deficiencies lie.

We need a clear-out of the old mind-set and the older players, and a radical new approach. We should no longer think in terms of who partners Shearer, who is probably the best-ever old-fashioned English forward, but that is simply not good enough any more at international level. It is no longer about holding it up until help arrives - two touches is one too many. France and Nicolas Anelka

showed how these days a striker's first touch has to be a cushioned pass or a flick that keeps the tempo going.

In midfield, Ince is long past his sell-by date and Redknapp is a clever, classy player, but unable to impose himself as a playmaker. Batty will never really hack it (or perhaps will always hack it) and Anderson is too inconsistent. We should set our benchmark by Zidane and Petit.

At the back, the post-booze Adams has been superb, but Anelka ran him ragged in the second half - if the ball is at the feet of quick clever players, he ain't in the game. Benchmark - Desailly or Leboeuf. Le Saux is a disaster defensively. Seaman is as slow and sluggish now as we realised Shilton was, all too late in 1990, as that deflected German free-kick flew over his head.

I suggest we throw Joe Cole, Matt Jansen, Gareth Barry and Darren Huckerby in with Beckham, Scholes, Ferdinand, Owen et al for the next 18 months and let them mature.

NIGEL CUBBAGE
Marlygate, Herts

SPORTS LETTERS

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**Quinnell
provides
some joy
for Henry**

BY CHRIS HEWETT

In reality, though, Wilkinson's promotion has more to do with putting the funny-shaped ball between the sticks than his ability to knock opposition centres into the middle of the next millennium. Woodward backed Dawson's kicking to the hilt before the Springbok Test but, although the gamble worked for him on that occasion, it was never the most convincing of arguments. "It would have been asking a lot of Matt to do the job again," the coach conceded. "Jonny's kicking was a big factor in my decision."



David Ashdown

Eight months ago in Brisbane, Wilkinson got it very

However, the misery of that humilation set him on a learning curve bordering on the vertical. "I came home from the southern hemisphere determined to make myself a better,

His highly educated right boot gives Woodward the chance to retain the half-back partnership that worked more than adequately against the Springboks, although Mike Cati has not been in the best of recent shape at stand-off and Dawson has been feeling the beat from Kyran Bracken, whose run of form at

Quite reasonably in the light of the Springbok triumph, Woodward has kept his changes to a minimum; indeed, there is only a single unenforced alteration, David Rees returning to the right wing in place of Tony Underwood. In the other obvi-

ENGLAND (v Scotland, Five Nations' Championship, Twickenham, Saturday): N Beal (Northampton); D Rees (Sale); J Wilkinson (Newcastle); J Goscock (Bath); D Linger (Harlequins); M Cact (Bath); M Dawson (Northampton); J Leonard (Harlequins); R Cockerill, D Garforth, M Johnson (all Leicester), T Rodber (Northampton); L Dallaglio (Wospo. capt); R Hill (Saracens); N Back (Leicester). Replacements: K Bracken (Saracens), P Grayson (Northampton), M Parry (Bath), D Grewcock (Saracens), G Rowntree (Leicester), N McCarthy (Gloucester).

**Chris Wyatt, the
Welsh lock, talks
about life in
the Dragons' engine room**

There are changes in the back row, too, where Eric Miller switches from blind-side flank to replace Victor Costello at No 8, while Dion O'Guinneagain is joined on the flank by the Ulsterman Andy Ward.

[illegible]

That is the date the Newcastle directors Freddie Shepherd and Douglas Hall, son of Sir John, are believed to have told the Association that they will end their funding of the club unless a new deal has been signed.

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THE INDEPENDENT
Wednesday 17 February 1999

Soldini turns the saviour in heavy seas

GIOVANNI SOLDINI, the Italian who so narrowly escaped death when making a record attempt across the Atlantic last year, yesterday turned rescuer himself, sailing 200 miles in heavy winds and seas to come to the aid of a fellow competitor in distress.

It was the second time the top French solo yachtswoman Isabelle Autissier has had to be plucked from her upturned yacht, this time in the remote southern Pacific, between New Zealand and Cape Horn on the third leg of the Around Alone Race from Auckland to Punta del Este, Uruguay.

In 1994 the Australian Navy came to Autissier's aid when she was dismasted and sinking when leading the second leg of the same race from Cape Town to Sydney. Yesterday the pinpoint accuracy of her position beacon enabled Soldini to find her in the dark. In what was described by the race organisers in Charleston, South Carolina, as "a masterful, heroic act of off-shore seamanship", there was an immediate echo of the way in which Britain's Pete Goss

SAILING
BY STUART ALEXANDER

went back to take Frenchman Raphael Dinelli off his upturned yacht over Christmas in the 1996 single-handed Vendée Globe.

The cause of Autissier's latest problems was unclear last night. Only a brief message had been received from Soldini, who had been using a 25-mile range radar to close in on Autissier in the final stages. That confirmed that Autissier was safely aboard Soldini's 60ft Fila and continuing the race to the tip of South America still 1,900 miles away. There were no reports of any injury. It is believed that Autissier's yacht, PRB, in which she had been overall leader, had been abandoned.

Earlier, when Autissier activated her distress beacons, a brief message had been received saying that she had capsized. But it was not known whether she was rescued from her yacht or was already in a life raft.

Part of Autissier's good fortune was also that Soldini was

close enough and able to sail fast enough to make the rescue relatively quick.

The new overall leader, Marc Thiercelin, said he was unable to turn back as most problems would make sailing upwind dangerous. It leaves just Thiercelin and Soldini in Class 1 after Britain's Josh Hall also retired on this leg after being dismasted and the leg one winner, Mike Golding, never made the start of leg three after running aground less than 200 miles from the finish of leg two in Auckland.

As well as expressing hope that she would be safely rescued, the remaining Briton in the race, Mike Garside in the Class II 50-footer Magellan Alpha, said he was glad his leading trio, of which he is second, was also close together to help each other in time of trouble. Twice previously Around Alone competitors have had to rescue each other on leg three, the Englishman Richard Broadhead picking up the Frenchman Jacques de Roux in 1983-3 and South Africa's Bertie Reed rescuing his fellow countryman John Martin in 1990-91.



Isabelle Autissier is wished well by the man who was to rescue her, Giovanni Soldini, before the third leg of the Around Alone Race. Allsport

HBO give Hamed chance to win back fans Clarke enjoys 'best win'

NASEEM HAMED is being backed to finally win over American audiences after signing a six-fight deal with cable television network Home Box Office.

HBO yesterday announced it has purchased the worldwide television rights for Hamed's fights over the next two years, while Sky Box Office will show the fights in this country.

The first broadcast will be Hamed's 12th defence of his World Boxing Organisation featherweight title against Paul

BOXING

Ingle in Manchester on April 10. Hamed's following two fights will be in the United States, the second in the summer and probably in Las Vegas or New York and the third in November or December.

It will provide an acid test of Hamed's popularity in the US following the cold reception to his points defeat of Northern Ireland's Wayne McCullough in Atlantic City last October.

"When you add up all of his deals he will be the equivalent of any major sports figure in America," said Kerry Davis, HBO's director of programming.

The Ingle fight will be Hamed's first since leaving promoter Frank Warren and trainer Brendan Ingle. Hamed, 24, is now being managed by his brother Rishi, with Barry Hearn handling the Ingle fight.

Lou DiBella, senior vice-president of HBO, claimed the deal will help stabilise Hamed's

career after a rocky patch. "Naseem's primary financial arrangement for television will be handled by us," he said. "To a large extent we have cut out the middle man. I think Naz has a lot of reasons to be very happy today."

The undefeated WBO champion was equally delighted today with his new training regime under American Oscar Suarez. "I'm becoming a new fighter. I'm gonna be more compact, more skilful and an

even stronger and harder fighter," said Hamed.

"I've got a new trainer who's shown me new stuff. I've been doing the same stuff for 17 years and won 31 fights with it. Now I'm training harder than ever."

The Hamed team see the Ingle bout as a stepping stone towards featherweight unification. "I want to beat the best," said Hamed. "I want to unify my weight class. Fighters love the belts. We want them wrapped around us."

DARREN CLARKE reckons he was due a change of luck after a succession of personal problems and last night his patience was rewarded when he landed "the best win" of his career with a 5-1 defeat of Steve Davis in the £370,000 Scottish Open at Aberdeen.

"Hopefully this will be a stepping stone to something better," added the world No 87. Clarke proved an insurmountable obstacle to the out-of-touch six-times world champion, Davis,

SNOOKER

and this victory will be a welcome boost as he continues his recovery after a serious motorway accident in 1997. The 28-year-old qualifier suffered badly damaged nerve endings in his neck after a wheel flew off a trailer and struck his car.

"I could have an operation to try and correct the problem but I've been advised the success rate is only 60-80. If it goes wrong I might not walk again

so I've decided not to bother," he said.

Not even Davis' safety-first tactics could prevent a downfall that once again threatens his long run in the top 16. "It wasn't a bad day at the office, it was worse than that," groaned the 41-year-old provisional world number 15.

Davis made the highest break of the match - 55 in frame three - but missed many easy balls he would have potted wearing a blindfold at his peak.

MUSSELBURGH

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FIVE-YEAR STATISTICS
■ LEADING TRAINERS: M Hammond 22-16 (68%), J H Johnson 20-16 (72%), P Monteith 16-50 (75%), C Parker 3-56 (53%).
■ LEADING JOCKEYS: A Dobbin 16-103 (75%), P Cartwright 15-53 (53%), P Niven 15-71 (65%), S Shaw 15-103 (65%).
■ FAVOURITES: 15 wins in 254 races (60%).
■ LONG DISTANCE RUNNERS: Zaidi (23) & Charlie Benter (25) won 350 miles.
■ BLINKERED FIRST TIME: Madman's Mirage (15), William Of Orange (15), Bitter Bythe Glass (42).

1.50 TOM MCCONNELL MEMORIAL HURDLE (CLASS D) £4,000 added 4yo 2m
1 ALBRIGHTON (5) (C) M Murphy 11-5 ... A Maguire
2 CIRCULUS (1) M Thomson 10-12 ... C McConneil (5)
3 DART (1) M Breen 10-12 ... A Dobbin
4 CORNINGTON (2) (C) S Bugh 10-12 ... S Taylor
5 MASTER TERN (5) (C) J O'Hara 10-12 ... R McGrath
6 STACADORE (2) (C) J O'Hara 10-12 ... R McGrath
7 STACADORE (2) (C) J O'Hara 10-12 ... R McGrath
8 STACADORE (2) (C) J O'Hara 10-12 ... R McGrath
9 STACADORE (2) (C) J O'Hara 10-12 ... R McGrath
10 STACADORE (2) (C) J O'Hara 10-12 ... R McGrath

FORM VERDICT
Micky Hammond has fresh import talent entered for the Triumph Hurdle but, though the stable seems to be returning to form, he is passed over in favour of the experience of ALBRIGHTON and Master Tern. The former, also a Triumph hopeful, has to concede 7lb but his proven ability on a firmish surface seems his preference.

2.20 ANDERSON STRATHGIRN NOVICE HANDICAP CHASE (CLASS F) £5,250 added 2m
1 ROSSIE (15) (C) P Monteith 11-10 ... C McConneil (5)
2 ZARDO (5) (C) K Burke 10-5 ... J Johnson
3 STONEBURY (4) (C) M Moore 7-10 ... J Callaghan
4 EN-JAY-BEE (4) (C) M Hammond 5-10 ... S Taylor
5 UP FOR RANSOM (2) (C) A Maguire 5-10 ... S Bugh
6 CHANDLER (2) (C) J O'Hara 5-10 ... R McGrath
7 ISLE OF RHÉ (1) (C) P Monteith 7-10 ... S Taylor
8 FALCON'S FLAME (1) (C) M Moore 7-10 ... J Callaghan
9 SILVER PEARL (2) (C) J Buggy 7-10 ... R McGrath

FORM VERDICT
A race where very few can be relied on to produce their best at present. Zaidi has possibilities, while Falcon's Flame (though still without after 22 attempts) can be a surprise. However, ROSSIE is the solid choice. He is consistent, suited by conditions, and will find today's opposition less testing than the company he has kept of late.

2.50 DICK VETERINARY COLLEGE FIVE YEAR OLD HURDLE (CLASS D) £4,000 added 2m
1 UNION TOWN (14) (C) P Monteith 11-10 ... C McConneil (5)
2 DORANS WAY (2) (C) M Moore 11-5 ... J Callaghan
3 BIT O' MAGIC (1) (C) R Allen 11-5 ... A Dobbin
4 OCH AI CANTON (8) (C) M Hammond 10-12 ... S Taylor
5 SEWARD SEVEN (1) (C) M Moore 10-12 ... J Callaghan
6 ADARMAH (2) (C) J Buggy 10-12 ... R McGrath
7 NORTH TIPP (4) (C) J Buggy 10-12 ... R McGrath
8 KIERCHER (2) (C) C Grant 10-12 ... R McGrath
9 PLANNING GAIN (2) (C) J O'Hara 10-12 ... R McGrath
10 PROUDY PAIR (1) (C) M Moore 10-12 ... J Callaghan

FORM VERDICT
An unimpressive bunch, the majority seem out of form and/or returning from lengthy lay-offs. Bit O' Magic will run, but perhaps not well enough to meet DORANS WAY. The latter tends to make the odd error but will be suited by conditions and can make it three wins from four attempts this season.

3.20 J.R. MCNNAIR HANDICAP CHASE (CLASS F) £4,000 added 3m
1 DARTS BOMB (15) (C) J M Jackson 11-10 ... T Siddle (5)
2 SALZMAN BEACH (15) (C) M Moore 11-10 ... C McConneil (5)
3 GALE FORCE (4) (C) P Monteith 10-12 ... S Taylor
4 SANTA JET (2) (C) M Moore 10-12 ... J Callaghan
5 CAMPTONFURR (2) (C) J O'Hara 10-12 ... R McGrath
6 MARVE ORRERY (2) (C) J O'Hara 10-12 ... R McGrath
7 GERMAN LEGEND (2) (C) J O'Hara 10-12 ... R McGrath
8 BROWNHATH KNOX (2) (C) C Grant 10-12 ... R McGrath

FORM VERDICT
The top four in the handicap hold the key to what looks a heavily-contested handicap. Darts Bomb, Salem Beach and Santa Jet all boast solid form, but in GALE FORCE they could face a rival who is nicely tested. He is a race tactician at Caterick and, with the breeze not going so well now, further improvement is a distinct possibility.

3.50 HAMBLED RIVER NOVICE HANDICAP HURDLE (CLASS D) £4,500 added 3m
1 CHARLIE BAKER (2) (C) K Burke 11-10 ... A Maguire
2 PHANTOM HAZE (2) (C) P Monteith 11-10 ... C McConneil (5)
3 FLOUNDER (2) (C) M Hammond 10-12 ... S Taylor
4 FLOUNDER (2) (C) M Hammond 10-12 ... S Taylor
5 FLOUNDER (2) (C) M Hammond 10-12 ... S Taylor
6 FLOUNDER (2) (C) M Hammond 10-12 ... S Taylor
7 FLOUNDER (2) (C) M Hammond 10-12 ... S Taylor
8 FLOUNDER (2) (C) M Hammond 10-12 ... S Taylor
9 FLOUNDER (2) (C) M Hammond 10-12 ... S Taylor
10 FLOUNDER (2) (C) M Hammond 10-12 ... S Taylor

FORM VERDICT
Take CHARLIE BAKER to prove too strong for some very frail rivals. He boasts two good efforts from his last three and gives the strong impression that three miles round a sharp track the this could be his very last ride.

4.20 FIFE HUNT CLUB HUNTERS' CHASE (CLASS H) £2,500 added 3m
1 ASTAC TWO (15) (C) J Buggy 11-10 ... R McGrath
2 COOLE ABBEY (21) (C) M Moore 11-10 ... C McConneil (5)
3 JOINT ACCOUNT (24) (C) F Neesham 10-12 ... S Taylor

FORM VERDICT
COOLE ABBEY looked to have a good future last season and could well be a lot better than some of the ageing opposition he meets today. Saini Laver is the danger but he was beaten in both his races under Rules last season and is likely to struggle against Coole Abbey.

4.50 WEATHERBYS STARS OF TOMORROW OPEN NH FLAT RACE (H) £2,000 2m
1 CLASH-A-CLASH (14) (C) M Moore 11-10 ... C McConneil (5)
2 HANGOVER HENRY (4) (C) M Moore 11-10 ... C McConneil (5)
3 JAMIE CHARLIE (2) (C) M Moore 11-10 ... C McConneil (5)
4 PRINCE SANDROVICH (1) (C) M Moore 11-10 ... C McConneil (5)
5 LABOUR (2) (C) M Moore 11-10 ... C McConneil (5)
6 BLUE MOON (2) (C) M Moore 11-10 ... C McConneil (5)
7 CHARTER ROYAL (2) (C) M Moore 11-10 ... C McConneil (5)
8 GREY EXPOSITION (2) (C) M Moore 11-10 ... C McConneil (5)
9 GUNMETAL (2) (C) M Moore 11-10 ... C McConneil (5)
10 QUATITY SURVIVOR (1) (C) M Moore 11-10 ... C McConneil (5)

FORM VERDICT
BLUE MOON can really well when third in what looks a hot race over the course and distance on the debut where he looks to have a lot to offer. He is a big surprise and second has been backed up (and he would be a big surprise if he were not good enough today). The newcomers to watch are Prince Sandrovich and Quatity Survivor.

4.50 LILY SELLING STAKES (CLASS G) £2,500 added 3yo 6f
1 LILY VENTURE (7) (C) M Moore 11-10 ... C McConneil (5)
2 LOUGHANIE (7) (C) M Moore 11-10 ... C McConneil (5)
3 ABSTRACT (11) (C) M Moore 11-10 ... C McConneil (5)
4 DIAMOND ROUGE (14) (C) M Moore 11-10 ... C McConneil (5)
5 JUST FOR YOU JANE (7) (C) M Moore 11-10 ... C McConneil (5)
6 MIDCOY SLIDES (17) (C) M Moore 11-10 ... C McConneil (5)
7 MIDCOY SLIDES (17) (C) M Moore 11-10 ... C McConneil (5)

FORM VERDICT
DISPOL CLAN, most attractively weighted with Trojan Girl on last season's form, goes well over the C&D and showed her turn is not for today again when narrowly beaten in a better race last week. The biggest threat could be Grandstand, who has continued on the upgrade since landing a welling race touch on his debut last week.

WOLVERHAMPTON

HYPERION
2.10 Port Meadow 2.40 Manileno 3.10 C-Harry 3.40 Grassland 4.10 Loughlanie 4.40 Copper Shell

GOING: Standard
STALLS: 71 & 101 - outside, rest - inside.
DRAW ADVANTAGE: Low to middle best for 71.
■ Forehand, left-hand, outside, low to middle best for 71.
■ Course in N of town on A442, Wolverhampton station 1/2.
■ Course in N of town on A442, Wolverhampton station 1/2.
■ ADMISSION: Club £15; Terraces £5 (2 off for CAP members); Diamond Club; Restaurant; Paddock; £750 to £3500 (including course entrance and meal, CAR PARK: free).

FIVE-YEAR STATISTICS
■ LEADING TRAINERS: R Hinchey 43-31 (60%), Dean McIlwain 43-30 (63%), M Johnston 47-42 (64%), P Evans 40-37 (61%).
■ LEADING JOCKEYS: S Sanders 43-31 (60%), Dean McIlwain 43-30 (63%), J Weaver 34-20 (77%), O Holland 31-33 (63%).
■ FAVOURITES: 478 wins in 1,478 races (32%).
■ BLINKERED FIRST TIME: None.

2.10 DAFODIL MAIDEN STAKES (CLASS D) £4,000 added 1m 1f 79yds
1 ABSOLUTE MAJORITY (2) (C) M Moore 11-10 ... C McConneil (5)
2 ABSOLUTE MAJORITY (2) (C) M Moore 11-10 ... C McConneil (5)
3 ABSOLUTE MAJORITY (2) (C) M Moore 11-10 ... C McConneil (5)
4 ABSOLUTE MAJORITY (2) (C) M Moore 11-10 ... C McConneil (5)
5 ABSOLUTE MAJORITY (2) (C) M Moore 11-10 ... C McConneil (5)
6 ABSOLUTE MAJORITY (2) (C) M Moore 11-10 ... C McConneil (5)
7 ABSOLUTE MAJORITY (2) (C) M Moore 11-10 ... C McConneil (5)
8 ABSOLUTE MAJORITY (2) (C) M Moore 11-10 ... C McConneil (5)
9 ABSOLUTE MAJORITY (2) (C) M Moore 11-10 ... C McConneil (5)
10 ABSOLUTE MAJORITY (2) (C) M Moore 11-10 ... C McConneil (5)

FORM VERDICT
MOSQUERO shown enough on turf as a juvenile to suggest he should land a five-year-old maiden. He is a horse who lacks endurance of mind but can be regarded as a potential threat. From down Queen has shown AW form, but is vulnerable to the juniors.

2.40 TULIP CLAIMING STAKES (CLASS F) £2,750 added 1m 8f 169yds
1 PRINCE DART (1) (C) M Moore 11-10 ... C McConneil (5)
2 PRINCE DART (1) (C) M Moore 11-10 ... C McConneil (5)
3 PRINCE DART (1) (C) M Moore 11-10 ... C McConneil (5)
4 PRINCE DART (1) (C) M Moore 11-10 ... C McConneil (5)
5 PRINCE DART (1) (C) M Moore 11-10 ... C McConneil (5)
6 PRINCE DART (1) (C) M Moore 11-10 ... C McConneil (5)
7 PRINCE DART (1) (C) M Moore 11-10 ... C McConneil (5)
8 PRINCE DART (1) (C) M Moore 11-10 ... C McConneil (5)
9 PRINCE DART (1) (C) M Moore 11-10 ... C McConneil (5)
10 PRINCE DART (1) (C) M Moore 11-10 ... C McConneil (5)

FORM VERDICT
Manileno is the clear pick on form and on official ratings, but the trainer has stated he does not go as well on the track as he does at Southwell and was sufficiently unconvinced by his success over 2m here this month to freeze his next race. He is not a materialised. Perhaps he is worth taking him on with MONACO GOLD, who shaped like a certain future winner on his reappearance after a lengthy absence. He possibly found the race coming too soon when disappointing behind Evedio Ruffo and Infamous in a sister race next time.

3.10 STANLEY RACING HANDICAP (CLASS C) £10,000 added 7f
1 CLASSY CLO (2) (C) M Moore 11-10 ... C McConneil (5)
2 CLASSY CLO (2) (C) M Moore 11-10 ... C McConneil (5)
3 CLASSY CLO (2) (C) M Moore 11-10 ... C McConneil (5)
4 CLASSY CLO (2) (C) M Moore 11-10 ... C McConneil (5)
5 CLASSY CLO (2) (C) M Moore 11-10 ... C McConneil (5)
6 CLASSY CLO (2) (C) M Moore 11-10 ... C McConneil (5)
7 CLASSY CLO (2) (C) M Moore 11-10 ... C McConneil (5)
8 CLASSY CLO (2) (C) M Moore 11-10 ... C McConneil (5)
9 CLASSY CLO (2) (C) M Moore 11-10 ... C McConneil (5)
10 CLASSY CLO (2) (C) M Moore 11-10 ... C McConneil (5)

FORM VERDICT
Most of these have still to win over the distance and though C-HARRY is 9lb higher than when recording his fourth course and distance success in December, he has held his form in claimers here and at Southwell since then. C-Harry appears as a likely outsider.

3.40 FREESIA HANDICAP (CLASS D) £5,500 added 3yo 5f
1 ANJOURNMENT (2) (C) M Moore 11-10 ... C McConneil (5)
2 ANJOURNMENT (2) (C) M Moore 11-10 ... C McConneil (5)
3 ANJOURNMENT (2) (C) M Moore 11-10 ... C McConneil (5)
4 ANJOURNMENT (2) (C) M Moore 11-10 ... C McConneil (5)
5 ANJOURNMENT (2) (C) M Moore 11-10 ... C McConneil (5)
6 ANJOURNMENT (2) (C) M Moore 11-10 ... C McConneil (5)
7 ANJOURNMENT (2) (C) M Moore 11-10 ... C McConneil (5)
8 ANJOURNMENT (2) (C) M Moore 11-10 ... C McConneil (5)
9 ANJOURNMENT (2) (C) M Moore 11-10 ... C McConneil (5)
10 ANJOURNMENT (2) (C) M Moore 11-10 ... C McConneil (5)

FORM VERDICT
2-11 Grassland, 5-2 Trojan Girl, 7-2 A-Yours-mothering, 8-2 Darts Bomb, 10-1 C-Harry, 11-10 A-Yours-mothering.

4.40 ROSE APPRENTICE HANDICAP (CLASS F) £3,000 added 1m 4f
1 OPERA BUFF (2) (C) M Moore 11-10 ... C McConneil (5)
2 OPERA BUFF (2) (C) M Moore 11-10 ... C McConneil (5)
3 OPERA BUFF (2) (C) M Moore 11-10 ... C McConneil (5)
4 OPERA BUFF (2) (C) M Moore 11-10 ... C McConneil (5)
5 OPERA BUFF (2) (C) M Moore 11-10 ... C McConneil (5)
6 OPERA BUFF (2) (C) M Moore 11-10 ... C McConneil (5)
7 OPERA BUFF (2) (C) M Moore 11-10 ... C McConneil (5)
8 OPERA BUFF (2) (C) M Moore 11-10 ... C McConneil (5)
9 OPERA BUFF (2) (C) M Moore 11-10 ... C McConneil (5)
10 OPERA BUFF (2) (C) M Moore 11-10 ... C McConneil (5)

FORM VERDICT
Preference is for COPPER SHELL, who is holding his form well (44-28) & is in the handicap and whose Southwell conqueror Dick Turpin was not disgraced in defeat on Monday.

4.40 ROSE APPRENTICE HANDICAP (CLASS F) £3,000 added 1m 4f
1 OPERA BUFF (2) (C) M Moore 11-10 ... C McConneil (5)
2 OPERA BUFF (2) (C) M Moore 11-10 ... C McConneil (5)
3 OPERA BUFF (2) (C) M Moore 11-10 ... C McConneil (5)
4 OPERA BUFF (2) (C) M Moore 11-10 ... C McConneil (5)
5 OPERA BUFF (2) (C) M Moore 11-10 ... C McConneil (5)
6 OPERA BUFF (2) (C) M Moore 11-10 ... C McConneil (5)
7 OPERA BUFF (2) (C) M Moore 11-10 ... C McConneil (5)
8 OPERA BUFF (2) (C) M Moore 11-10 ... C McConneil (5)
9 OPERA BUFF (2) (C) M Moore 11-10 ... C McConneil (5)
10 OPERA BUFF (2) (C) M Moore 11-10 ... C McConneil (5)

FORM VERDICT
Preference is for COPPER SHELL, who is holding his form well (44-28) & is in the handicap and whose Southwell conqueror Dick Turpin was not disgraced in defeat on Monday.

England A win against the odds

ENGLAND A fought back to win an astonishing first match in the one-day series at the Queens Club after they had appeared to be coming second for almost the entire contest.

A fine all-round performance from Andrew Flintoff and a mature 70 from Vikram Solanki saw England home with one wicket and three balls to spare.

For the first time on the tour, Michael Vaughan lost the toss and saw Zimbabwe make a steady start on a splendid batting pitch.

An enterprising fourth-wicket partnership between Dirk Vijlken (73) and Stuart Carlisle (80) produced 112 runs in 19 overs, but the rest of the line-up provided little resistance with the exception of Craig Evans' breezy 30 from 20 balls.

In reply England lost wickets steadily and when Graeme Swann was run out after colliding in midweek with Solanki England were 156 for 6 with 13 overs remaining.

Solanki then took charge, putting on 66 in nine overs, before Paul Francis before the latter was controversially run out after he gave the charge to a oo-ball.

Thomas was bowled in the same over, and Solanki's innings ended in the next, so Dean Cosker came in to join Chris Read with 25 needed off 19 balls and one wicket in hand.

Pakistan rescued by determined Moin

PAKISTAN 185 India 26-1

collapse when he had Shahid Afridi caught behind in the third over.

Prasad dismissed Saeed Anwar for a duck and Wajidullah Wasti, while Srinnath took the wickets of Ijaz Ahmed, Yusuf Youhana, and Azhar Mahmood in quick succession.

Moin and Salim Malik then staged the recovery, adding 84 runs for the seventh wicket. Malik was out for 32 immediately after tea, before Moin fell to Sachin Tendulkar's spin. Wasim then hit an aggressive 38 to give Pakistan a reasonable total.

Scoreboard, Digest, page 27

Football: United and Arsenal meetings have an underlying mood of aggression that often escalates into violence

Belligerent night at Old Trafford

Kanu is ready for United baptism

BY GUY HODGSON

WHEN ALEX FERGUSON strayed into his private thoughts and "off the record" territory last month it was to Arsenal he headed. "Belligerent" was how he described last year's Double winners, a twined accusation if ever there was one.

No team which contains the spiky talents of Roy Keane and Nicky Butt can be labelled supine so the Manchester United manager was also wandering among pots and kettles. Winners are belligerent and both Ferguson's team and Arsenal have their fair share of what are euphemistically called "winners".

Around this smokescreen of accusation, Ferguson did put his finger on one fact. When United meet Arsenal there is an underlying mood of aggression and frequently it escalates into violence. If tonight's Premiership meeting at Old Trafford included a sending-off no one would be surprised.

The strange thing is the supporters of both clubs have reserved their utmost loathing for nearer targets, Liverpool and Tottenham. Meanwhile, the players and the managers have been training their sights on each other.

The managers clearly are not bosom buddies, an atmosphere that began when Arsène Wenger criticised Ferguson's perennial moan about fixture congestion in his first season at Highbury, but the players go back much further.

The teams have a history of antipathy. You could return to the Sixties and examine the seething bile that would erupt whenever Denis Law and Ian Ure laid eyes on each other. Ironically they would later become team-mates at Old Trafford but that is archeological. There are more pertinent and recent relics of rancour.

Only Tony Adams remains from the Arsenal team which surrendered a 17-game unbeaten run at Old Trafford in January 1987, a game in which David Rocastle was sent off and six players were booked – and those were times when cautions were not showered like confetti by referees.

The traditions have been taken up by their successors. In 1988 there were reports of a scuffle in the Highbury tunnel in the aftermath of an explosive FA Cup tie lost 2-1 by United after Brian McClair blazed a last-minute penalty into the North Bank.

Nigel Winterburn had angered the United players that night with over-the-top celebrations and it probably was not a coincidence that the Arsenal full-back was to be the fore at the



Arsenal and United were involved in a 21-man brawl in 1990 (above) and Peter Schmeichel (below) lies injured after Ian Wright's two-footed tackle three years ago. Empics

most notorious of incidents involving the clubs in October 1990.

A 21-man brawl broke out during the Gunners' 1-0 win at Old Trafford (only David Seaman failed to get involved) and as a consequence Arsenal were deducted two points and United one. Both clubs were also fined £50,000 by the Football Association and warned about their future conduct.

Matters simmered rather than flared – although Eric Cantona was sent off on one controversial evening at Highbury – until three years ago when lingering hostility became embodied in Peter Schmeichel and Ian Wright. A late tackle by the striker angered the Dane, who was later accused of making racist comments by Wright.

Later in the season Wright made a two-footed tackle which Ferguson called "a disgrace" and the FA and the Professional Footballers' Association became involved. Even now

Schmeichel will not talk about either incident although friends have let it be known he was very upset about the racism allegations.

Tensions heightened since last season when Arsenal beat United home and away en route to their first title since their point-penalised season of 1990-91 and were not soothed at Highbury in September when the latter produced their worst performance of the season, going down 3-0. Not for the first time the visitors ended with only 10 men, Butt being sent off.

Tonight's game is unlikely to be less aggressive because both clubs regard the other as the most likely to stop them winning the championship this season. "If you finish above Manchester United you will win the League," Tony Adams said last week, while Ferguson fears Arsenal if only because "they now know what it takes to win the title".

Ferguson's comments to the

Sunday Times last month, for which he has since apologised, will have thrown a match into the acetylene. "I'll tell you what they do," he said, "and I've spoken to other managers about this and they all agree. When Arsenal are not doing well in a game they turn it into a battle to try to make the opposition lose concentration."

"They do that all the time. The number of fights involving Arsenal is more than Wimbledon in their heyday."

Ferguson said those comments were off the record although, pertinently, he did not deny making them, and in the unlikely event of Wenger needing to fire up his troops this evening then pinning the above to the dressing-room wall would be as good a way as any.

And if the game is won by a controversial goal this evening? Both managers will contact the FA and insist the game is replayed. And hell will start advertising skiing holidays.



Dublin plays through pain Phillips hopes to stand tall

BY TOMMY STANFORTH

DION DUBLIN will go through the pain barrier to try to put Aston Villa's Premiership title challenge back on course, but his manager, John Gregory, may yet force the striker to have surgery which could keep him out of the game for several weeks.

Dublin will ignore a troublesome groin problem to lead Villa's attack in the absence of Stan Collymore against Leeds tonight.

Gregory admits that the performances of his £5.75m signing from Coventry have been badly affected by the injury. He says that instant surgery would be the best option even though Dublin is willing to delay going under the surgeon's knife until the end of the campaign.

"Dion is not doing himself justice," Gregory said. "He's had rest and missed a couple of games but it hasn't cured the problem. It is still there."

"It's one of those injuries that he cannot do any more damage to than he has done already. He's having to play with the injury. It is a bit uncomfortable and you can see his lack of movement."

"He should play tomorrow. We will strap him up. He's desperate to get on the pitch and is willing to try and get through to the end of the season without having surgery."

"But he is not doing himself justice and if it becomes too unbearable and causes him too much embarrassment then we will have to make the decision for him to have surgery."

"If he does have to have surgery he could be out for several weeks but it might turn out to be the best option for him even though we are a little restricted in who we can select at present."

Paul Merson and Gareth Southgate will return for Gregory as they aim to bounce back from successive defeats at the hands of Newcastle and Blackburn.

Southgate has been troubled by a hip complaint which forced his withdrawal from the England squad to face France last week while Merson was ruled out of the same international with a back problem.

Gregory said: "I don't think there is too much wrong and in the last match against Blackburn we played well and created chances but paid for a couple of individual errors."

"We need a win now to give us a lift and a bit more self-belief. Two or three wins now and we are right back in the hunt."

"We are not too despondent even though a few pundits who said we weren't going to stay at the top have got a bit of a smug

look on their faces after our last couple of results."

"This is the first hiccup I've had in my 12 months in charge and I'm disappointed to have slipped out of the top three but it is not as if we are miles adrift."

"We think we are going into the last part of the season still as serious title contenders."

Gregory admitted: "It is probably a good thing for us that we are going to be up against one of the in-form sides because that will bring the best out of us."

"In all honesty I couldn't give a monkey's what it looks like tomorrow night providing we get the three points to get back into the promotion race."

Gregory revealed that Collymore will not return to Villa from his stress counselling for another 10 days and that makes it even more urgent for Dublin to be patched up.

Phillips hopes to stand tall

BY MARK PIERSON

THE SUNDERLAND striker Kevin Phillips is hoping to strike another blow for the little man as his side returns to Worthington Cup semi-final action tonight.

The 5ft 7in striker saw Tony Cottee – just an inch taller – give Leicester a 2-1 first-leg lead at The Stadium of Light last month with two instinctive finishes.

While the former Watford player knows that his side are the underdogs he is determined to disprove the assertion that big is necessarily beautiful. "Tony Cottee is the sort of player I look up to," said Phillips without a hint of irony.

"Since I've been in the North-east, people have mentioned me in the same bracket and as the same sort of player. If I can achieve what he's achieved in his career then I'll be more than happy."

"It just goes to show that not everyone has to be six foot to succeed. Tony's a great role model for the smaller lads."

Phillips, who missed three months of the current season with a toe injury, has nevertheless reached double figures after his 35-goal contribution in 1997-98.

His late penalty winner at Bristol City on Saturday took him to 11 but he knows he will be facing one of the more formidable defences at Filbert Street. "Matt Elliott, Steve Walsh and Gerry Taggart are the three biggest centre-halves I've ever played against," he said.

"We've got big men up front in Niall Quinn and Danny Dichio, if he plays, so we can challenge them, but they're very strong."

"They've also got two good central midfield players and Emile Heskey and Cottee up front, who were a different class on the night up here. But if we can keep them out then we stand a good chance."

Gavin McCann's late goal allowed the First Division leaders to just about keep the tie alive and Phillips is confident that Martin O'Neill's men can expect a tough battle. "We've given ourselves a chance and we'll go there and enjoy it," he said.

Peter Reid, the Sunderland manager, acknowledges that Leicester are favourites to reach the final, but refuses to write off his side's chances of reaching the final at Wembley next month.

"We have to go to Leicester with a positive attitude, but I know my players are up for it and you never know what can happen," he said.

"Leicester are a good footballing side and they have a positive manager but they might freeze in front of their own supporters."

"I think we have played quite well against three Premiership clubs in cup competitions this season. We were unlucky at Blackburn in the FA Cup and while Leicester probably deserved their first-leg win, we are not out of it."

Sunderland have bounced back from three successive defeats, albeit two in Premiership clubs, to take maximum points from games against Swindon and Bristol City to consolidate their position at the top of the First Division.

Morris backs Chelsea's cause

JOEY MORRIS expects a tough Premiership battle when Chelsea meet Blackburn at Stamford Bridge tonight. The midfielder has established himself in Gianluca Vialli's squad and is looking forward to pitting his wits against Brian Kidd's resurgent team.

Chelsea have slipped out of their fluent early-season form, but Morris feels Saturday's 1-0 FA Cup win at Sheffield Wednesday may give them the right tonic as the season enters its crucial final stages. "I thought we played really well on Saturday and the manager was really buzzing after the game," said 20-year-old Morris.

"Hopefully we've turned the corner after a bad patch. All of

us believe that. Blackburn are a tough team. They can play a physical game, but I think there are enough players in our team known for their physical attributes as well and I'm confident we can come away with something from the game."

Vialli's team have stumbled since topping the Premiership and now have to claw back ground on Manchester United. Long-term injuries to Gustavo Poyet, Pierluigi Casiraghi and Tore Andre Flo and the transfer of Brian Laudrup have not helped matters.

Vialli has been the first to acknowledge loss of form but the Italian has seen his team grind out points while playing indifferently. As a result Chelsea are

second in the League and alive on two cup fronts. The Hillsborough win booked a place in the last eight of the FA Cup, and the Blues continue the defence of their European Cup-Winners' Cup crown next month.

Fixtures will come thick and fast over the coming months, and Vialli knows the hectic end of season can catch clubs out. "We like to play well, but it's not easy because of the fixture schedule," he said.

"It's nice to see that after a few poor games we are now playing well. This is the way we would like to play. But it's not always possible because you play so many matches in England. But we hope from now to the end of the season we will

keep giving good performances and keep winning."

Dennis Wise starts his latest ban against Blackburn. He was sent off for the fourth time this season in the FA Cup fourth-round replay win against Oxford.

Eddie Newton, Bernard Lambourde, Andy Myers and Mark Nicholls are all added to Saturday's squad, while Morris is likely to continue in midfield. The England Under-21 international has no intention of stepping aside for any of his more illustrious team-mates.

Morris told Chelsea Club-Call: "I'm definitely a better player than I was this time last year. Off the pitch I've matured, and that's reflected in my performances."

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er steps are taken when these things are negotiated you can have the best of both worlds. At the time of the next rights negotiations, he said, the Premier League could insert a price ceiling in any deal with broadcasters. To tamper with a system that appeared to be working well as it was seemed foolish, if not dangerous, he added. "You could bring the temple down on people's heads when it simply needs some re-roofing," he concluded. Having brought the house down himself, he made his exit. The case

The former Doncaster Rovers owner Ken Richardson has been charged with misconduct by the Football Association following his conviction for conspiracy to commit arson. Richardson was convicted at Sheffield Crown Court last year for his part in the plot to burn down Doncaster's stadium. He has parted company with the club since their relegation from the Football League.



ration and no doubt the pits
was to their liking. The Ar
sorely missed their Engla
Under 21 full-back Jon Eve
who was on manoeuvres.
Cambridge University: M Harris;
Jones 1; McIlwre, P Outram, P Dodd
Wilcock, T Gruslin, A Cotton (capt).
Weir, J Costelloe, A Loid. Substitu
used: 5 Ameraseker, J Craven.
Ayr: Capt O Sherry, S/Sgt G Syme
Pte I. Lon, L J. Welch, Capt A Taylor; C
Greenwood, M. Jennings (capt), C
R Forsyth, S C Milne, Capt W. W
S/Sgt D Basher. Substitutes used:
G Fordham, R H P Monneke, L Clpi S
Umpires: A Budd (ECHUA) and T Ke
(CSHA).

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WOODWARD CALLS FOR WILKINSON P23 • PRESTON'S LIVING LEGEND P22

Keegan may be England coach today

KEVIN KEEGAN could be confirmed as England's new coach today after another day of hard talking produced progress on the issue of his working relationship with Howard Wilkinson and his refusal to walk out on Fulham.

The Football Association's international sub-committee convened for two hours yesterday to discuss the snags which arose during Keegan's discussions on Monday with the FA's acting chief executive, David Davies, and the chairman of the international committee, Noel White.

After a meeting, attended by White, Davies, Ipswich chairman David Sheepshanks, Sheffield Wednesday chairman Dave Richards and Arsenal vice-chairman David Dein, an FA spokesman reported "progress is being made". He added that there had been further contact with Keegan by phone at his

home in the North-east.

The talks are understood to have centred on two main areas. One was Keegan's insistence that if he takes the job, he wants absolute control of the England set-up, from who works alongside him as assistant and backroom staff with the senior squad to the composition of Under-21 and B squads.

Keegan's perception of what the post entails runs contrary to the concept of continuity espoused by Wilkinson. The FA's technical director took over as England's caretaker coach after the fall of Glenn Hoddle and supervised the side for last week's home defeat by France and efforts were made yesterday to find a compromise that does not undermine the power base of the former Leeds

United manager.

The other sticking point, which is believed to concern Keegan more, has been his determination not to break his contract with Fulham as chief operating officer. It still has 18 months, and he believes he could juggle the two roles. The FA's acting chairman, Geoff Thompson, has been adamant that the 48-year-old former England captain would have to leave the Second Division promotion favourites by the summer.

Whether Fulham's owner, Mohamed al-Fayed, has now given Keegan his blessing in the national interest is unclear. However, it is thought that the discussions have brought the parties closer to a mutually agreeable solution.

If compromise has indeed been reached and Keegan is paraded at Lancaster Gate within the next 24 hours, his first match in charge will be England's make-or-break qualifier for Euro 2000 against Poland at Wembley on 27 March. The European campaign resumes in June against Sweden and Bulgaria, while there is also a friendly in Hungary on 28 April, when Fulham could well be at a critical point in their season.

Arsène Wenger, who figured in early betting as the man most likely to be England's first foreign coach, came up with a light-hearted solution to the club-v-country conflict yesterday. "Maybe the answer would be for Fayed to buy all the top England players for Fulham," the Arsenal manager said.

Wenger also shed light on why the leading Premiership managers have not been rushing to fill the hot seat vacated by Hoddle. "Being an international manager used to be the most prestigious job of all, but times have changed. Club competitions have become more prestigious than international games, apart from one month every four years for the World

United fans vote Cantona the best

THE ARRIVAL of Eric Cantona in 1992 may have heralded the most concentrated period of success Manchester United have known, but United fans clearly have little sense of history.

The fans have voted Eric Cantona the best player in the club's history. A readers' ballot organised by United's official magazine puts Cantona in first place ahead of George Best, Sir Bobby Charlton and legendary players of the past like Duncan Edwards and Tommy Taylor.

Ryan Giggs took third place between Best and Sir Bobby and eighth-placed David Beckham finished ahead of another 1960s luminary, Denis Law.

Forgotten were Billy Meredith - the Cantona of the early

1900s - and the Busby Babes Liam Whelan, Jackie Blanchflower and David Pegg. Johnny Carey, who led United to their first post-war League and FA Cup successes, failed to make the top 50.

Justyn Barnes, the magazine editor, is not too surprised. "The average age of our readers is 22, and that is reflected in the high placing of modern players," he said.

"The 90s have been the most consistently successful era in United's history, but it is still arguable whether Ryan Giggs, who helped win two Doubles, deserves to be ranked above Sir Bobby."

Top 10: 1 Eric Cantona, 2 George Best, 3 Ryan Giggs, 4 Sir Bobby Charlton, 5 Bryan Robson, 6 Duncan Edwards, 7 Peter Schmeichel, 8 David Beckham, 9 Mark Hughes, 10 Denis Law.



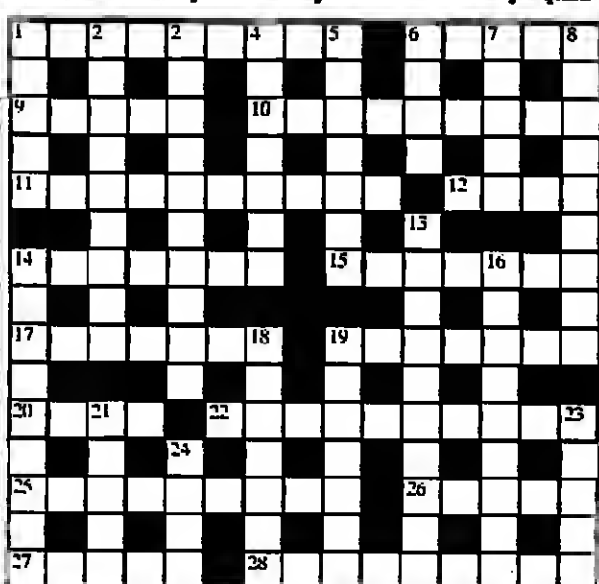
David Howells, fresh from his Dubai success last week, chips on to the 10th during the Qatar Masters pro-am in Doha yesterday. Allsport

THE WEDNESDAY CROSSWORD

No.3848 Wednesday 17 February

by Aquila

Tuesday's Solution



- ACROSS**
- His Excellency lodging in Panama, perhaps? (9)
 - Commodore initially is indebted to yachting centre (5)
 - Theatre intended for singing (5)
 - Butterfly operating all over the place (6-3)
 - From purse, coins go at such great speed (10)
 - River that does not start in the country? (4)
 - A flinty product, somewhat (7)
 - Accommodation for passengers unsuitable for chicken-in-the-basket? (7)
 - Clerical men sometimes taken on board? (7)
 - Bob taking hulle? That

- shows how far a quarrel can go (7)
- Holly is one taking law (4)
 - They go off in smoke as a learner's surrounded by guns (4-6)
 - Actor cued to get dressed for military parade (9)
 - University celebrate creating employment (5)
 - Cleat hammered to striking effect (5)
 - Stiff paper for church people in short section of exam (9)
- DOWN**
- Retains advantages (5)
 - Athletics leader, with awards, wastes away (9)
 - Coordinate presentation

- of medal, perhaps (10)
- Retrenchment required of company in money trouble (7)
 - Up with the lack? (7)
 - Composer limited to four notes (4)
 - Drink tea brewed in West Riding, initially (5)
 - One brought in to take the place of petitioner (9)
 - What gives relief after a heavy fall? (4-6)
 - Construct forge (9)
 - "Else", white rose variety (9)
 - Rugby population supporting prison using U-shaped clamp (7)
 - Note one who ignored Polonius, to get a kitchen appliance (7)
 - Do better than 40, say, in Rome (5)
 - A good deal of vision (5)
 - Essential thing for musicians on street (4)

Hill 'shocked' after Gloucester sacking

RICHARD HILL yesterday became the second managerial casualty of the season when he was sacked by Gloucester after three years and four months in charge at Kingsholm.

Philippe Saint-André, the France international wing, will take over until the end of the season. Hill, who was appointed director of rugby in October 1995, said: "It has been a fair old shock. We are all very disappointed in the table and it doesn't look good from the outside, we are fifth from bottom and I cannot argue with that fact."

The Gloucester team manager John Fidler, a close friend of Hill's, keeps his job, and he said: "It's a very sad day here at the club. But we have to realise that we are in a business."

RUGBY UNION

BY DAVID LLEWELLYN

Tom Walkinshaw, the part owner of the Arrows Formula One team who holds a 73 per cent stake in the club underlined the business approach when he said: "He [Hill] is the guy in charge and he is the one responsible if it doesn't work."

The dismissal will fuel speculation that Hill may attract the attention of Bath. Their former scrum-half still lives in the city, and Bath are struggling too.

Privately they acknowledge that they would like to appoint a director of rugby to relieve head coach Andy Robinson, a former team-mate of Hill's, of some of his administrative burdens and let him concentrate

on getting things right on the field.

Last night the Bath general manager, Bob Calleja, said: "The reality is that we are all under constant review, but I can confirm that we are not contemplating any immediate personnel changes."

Hill confined himself to a cautious: "At the moment I have no plans in place because I had not intended to lose my job overnight like this."

Even after their ninth league defeat against Harlequins last Saturday Hill was insisting that Walkinshaw had not lost patience at the club's poor showing, but last night he said: "At least I've got plenty of time now to concentrate on my England A coaching duties."

Hill's false optimism, page 23

The race that had no winner

WAS THIS the worst horse race ever? The world of racing, used to dealing in winners and losers, had a rare no-score draw when a steeplechase at a Yorkshire point-to-point became the race with no winner. Now they know how it feels at Goodison Park.

The opening contest at Sunday's Badsworth meeting, on a custom-made course on the inside of Wetherby racecourse, attracted just two runners, the veteran 13-year-old My True Clown, honest but slow, and the ex-Irish eight-year-old Can I Come Too, who had fallen twice and been pulled up the got so far behind his rider decided it was

RACING

BY IAN DAVIES

"pointless" to continue) in his four runs in his native land.

My True Clown soon lived up to his reputation for coming off the bridle in the paddock, leading only as far as the third fence, from which point Can I Come Too overtook his rival. My True Clown plugged on gallantly, but, despite the slow pace, found it increasingly difficult to remain within the same postal district as the leader. Louise Hampshire, his rider, gave up the ghost and pulled

him up at the fourth-last fence, half a mile from home.

However, Can I Come Too failed to profit. The horse refused to jump the next obstacle - the third last - and, despite the best efforts of jockey Ian Bennett, declined to negotiate the fence on any of Bennett's three subsequent attempts.

The race was therefore abandoned and all bets - bookmakers act on the principle if you can't win, you can't lose! - were returned. So, if you ever go for a day at the races, don't forget to ask the bookies to quote you a price about the draw.

Racing, page 24

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BUSINESS REVIEW

THE MAN WHO OWNS CYBERSPACE OR HOW MASAYOSHI SON NETTED \$15bn IN FOUR EARTH YEARS



Illustration: Krina Vimali

Inside: The superstore that ate America, coming to a high street near you, page 4
Can DMGT survive the FTSE 100? page 5
The adman's adman revealed, page 6
Plus: Hamish McRae, Diane Coyle, Derek Pain, Jo Davis and The Trader

THE BUSINESS WORLD

Employ clever people and make work fun

WISE COMPANIES make work fun. Even wiser companies create an umbrella where their creative people work for themselves as well as for the firm. And the wisest companies of all are those that can make their best people bring their good ideas to them, rather than leaving to develop them themselves.

One of the great boom areas in international business is organising events - product launches, "thank yous" for good customers, days out for staff and their families, and so on. If done well, they can be wonderful; done badly they can be torturingly embarrassing. The one thing all have in common is that events are expensive, time consuming and just a little dangerous.

So why do companies take this risk? This answer, I think, lies in two words: "human capital".

Most businesses are very well aware that their key asset lies in the minds of the people they employ. Add up the identifiable value of the total assets of any company, the factories, the product stream and the licensing agreements. Then look at

the company's market capitalisation. There is invariably a gap, sometimes a huge one. In the case of some of the fastest-growing types of business - investment banking, management consultancy, software development - there are virtually no conventional assets at all. All the value is in the people.

This raises string of profound questions for company leaders. How do you manage these assets? How do you build the stock of human capital? How do you extract the value of this capital for shareholders? Or, at its simplest, how do you get clever people to work for you?

Unsurprisingly, companies produce a string of different answers to these questions. Many devise elaborate incentive programmes, which has been reasonably easy in a strong share market; you give people shares. One company, Skandia Life in Sweden, has tried to measure the stock of capital in the heads of its employees and deploy the knowledge as widely as possible across the group. It produces a human capital report alongside its

financial reports to make its commitment more explicit.

Other groups like Andersen Worldwide, the accountants and consultants, or Motorola, the communications group, have "universities" which are devoted to improving the skill level of their employees. Enormous resources are put into this: the Andersen campus near Chicago feels just like an exclusive US liberal arts college.

Quite aside from the general benefit to the group of putting resources into training, there is a simple business rationale for such ventures. I once asked an executive why his company spent so much on training. What stopped people taking this expensive training and going off and working for some one else?

"You don't understand," he replied. "It is because we spend so much on training that people stay with us. We employ clever people who know their value and who could walk out of the door whenever they want. But provided we go on increasing that value - adding to their human capital - they will



HAMISH MCRAE

The hardest trick of all for companies is to create a greenhouse where staff can develop new businesses under the protection and with the support of the parent

stay with us. It is the moment we stop that they take their brains away."

Staff retention is a wholly respectable reason for paying attention to training. But every company can devise a cutting-edge training scheme. Every company can develop incentive schemes. And I suppose every company can dream up yet more glamorous venues for parties, for there are plenty of specialists to help them. As human capital becomes yet more important to company survival, what will be the qualities that distinguish the great from the OK?

I have two suggestions. The first is the great companies will seek to make the whole job fun - not just the events designed to reward key staff. Now of course not every aspect of a company's activities is going to be enjoyable. We all have to do things we don't like doing. But anyone who has spent much time with different companies will quickly pick up the warning signs: an excess of deference to senior staff, and an evident fear

of criticism are two good indicators that something is not quite right.

The second is to create fluid structures of employment. To persuade clever people to work for you is not just a matter of offering a better package than the opposition. The rival may not be the company next door, but rather the person starting up their own business.

If a person can make more money (and have more fun) working for themselves, why should they work for an employer at all? The answer for some people may be that there is nothing that can be done. The new communications technologies built around the Internet are almost certainly tipping the balance of power away from most large companies (not all - look at Microsoft) and towards very small ones. But many people will be prepared to carry on working for an employer provided they can bring their personal business under the wing of the group they work for.

These are enormous challenges for business leadership, they represent a seismic shift that is taking power away from the corporation

and towards the individual. Few businesses are accustomed to thinking of making their work fun; and fewer still could accommodate employees with an explicit split in their loyalties between their own private work and their job.

But the hardest trick of all, and therefore the one that one that brings the biggest benefits if a firm can pull it off, will be to create a greenhouse where staff can develop new businesses with the support of the parent.

The new industries of tomorrow almost always start with a few individuals and a good idea. They do not start in the established commercial giants. Just as Microsoft was not founded as a sub-division of IBM, the new industries will be created by clever people outside today's commercial giants.

But need that happen? The great prize awaiting every large business in the world is to grow the human capital industries of tomorrow. To win it, they need to create fluid employment structures to retain the cleverest people; then build the greenhouse to develop their ideas.

DATELINE: MODENA, ITALY

The profit in firm family values

BY FRANCES KENNEDY

The sleek steel-blue LGV (laser-guided vehicle), a sort of R2-D2 without the flashing lights, purrs quietly as it lifts up the pallet of components, pivots slowly and moves across the storehouse to deposit them. It is programmed to follow the daily rhythms of the factory. At the end of the working day, it shuffles over to "bed"; a power point in the wall that recharges its batteries overnight.

The scene is not from a futuristic movie nor from a state of the art complex in Japan or Korea. We are in the factory of one of the countless medium-sized family firms that are the backbone of Italy's economy. Rossi Motoriduttori, based near Modena, world leaders in gear reducers and variators. Chances are if you took an escalator or opened an automatic gate recently, their products made it possible.

"Certainly this is the way things are going," said managing director Greco Vero. "Fewer people on the shop floor, using machines when they are suitable and keeping human beings for more skilled work."

Modena's leap from post-war poverty to prosperity has been remarkable. The area has the sixth highest per capita income in the country and its industry totals more than 2 percent of Italy's annual exports. Expensive new cars and full restaurants are the tip of an iceberg of economic well-being. Modenese businessmen have a reputation for their adaptability and thinking ahead.

Not surprisingly, with the approach of the scary new millennium with the ghoul of globalisation, Modena's family-run firms are having a strategy rethink.

"We're well established here in Europe but to penetrate in the rest of the world we may have to forge alliances with, for example, an American company," said Vero. An-

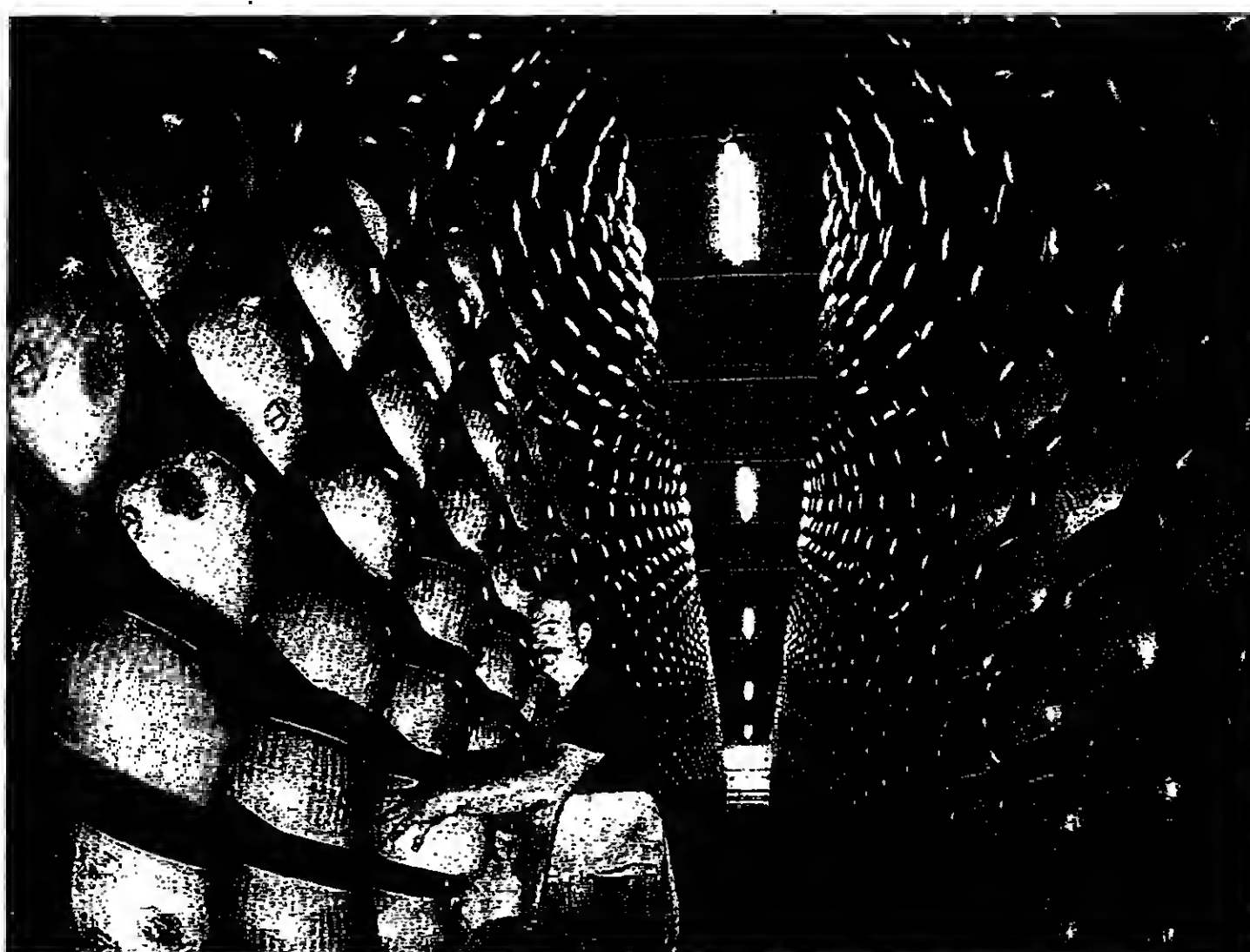
other development which Italian companies have tended to resist, could be a stock market float.

Most people associate the Modena area as the biggest producer of Parmesan cheese, or for its famed tortellini or balsamic vinegar or Ferrari. Yet economists from Harvard to Heidelberg study it for its unique economic model.

"All this area was agricultural plains after the war," said Claudio Lucchese, indicating the panorama of chimneys, factories and roads that makes up Sassuolo, Italy's "Ceramic Valley". "We were poor but the hills nearby were rich in clay so we started with ceramics." Lucchese's father started with a couple of machines trying to mass-produce tiles. Today their company Florin has covered the corridors leading to the Sistine Chapel and the swimming pools at the Atlanta Olympics. The company is still firmly in the hands of the Lucchese family; the founder's grandchildren are now in key management roles and profits have been poured back into the firm.

As tile makers prospered, suppliers and subcontractors who served their needs sprang up - glaze-makers, manufacturers of cutting machines, creators of firing ovens. "If we need a machine fixed it's just down the road," said Lucchese. "But the reasons the industrial districts work is that while there is healthy competition within the sector we know the value of interdependence. This stands us in good stead against Spain which is making inroads into our market."

Lucchese's ceramic production machines are created by another Modenese self-made millionaire, Franco Stefani, whose obsessive pursuit of innovation has earned him the nickname Archimedes. A short, lively man with spiky white hair, he began by creating machines for the ceramics industry and has taken that to the limit. "Look and touch,"



A vast hall of the famed Parmesan cheese lends a strong scent of success to modern Modena

J.P. Amet/Sygnma

he says proudly, indicating two apparently identical pieces of green flecked marble. "Which one's the fake?" Only by turning them upside down can you tell.

His company, System, still 100 per cent family-owned, has branched into automation and logistics. "The only way to keep ahead is to con-

stantly think about making processes better," says Stefani, who has a vertical storage system that provides 200 metres of space in just four square metres. "We generate our own resources. We set up technical schools or faculties at the local university to train specialised staff. If we waited for the government we

would be out of business."

In the food sector, there are fewer family firms and more large industrial groups. Now, one of Modena's gastronomic specialties, fresh tortellini, are to be marketed abroad. "We have signed a deal with ASDA and are negotiating with Tesco to produce for them," said

Bruno Venturelli, head of fresh pasta at the Fini plant. "We have been hesitant to export because a product with a limited shelf life needs excellent transport and distribution, but its going to be fundamental in the future."

Ravarino, to the north of Modena, seems an unlikely spot for a com-



pany at the cutting edge of Italian street wear, most of which is snapped up by Brits, Japanese and Californians. It was here, among pear and walnut trees, that thirty-something Carlo Rivetti and his sister, whose family own a large textile manufacturer, left the fold to take over two struggling brands, C.P. Company and Stone Island.

Rivetti's company produce fabrics that protect against electromagnetic waves, windbreakers that change colour with the heat, metropolitan jackets with anti-smog masks incorporated and clothes that are tear-resistant.

"Ours is a niche market," said Carlo, a thin sandy-haired man with a quirky smile. "We produce only about a million items a year. We can't and don't want to compete with the big names or the mass producers. We're betting on quality and experimentation. We also count on a personal touch. If an item is not moving in the boutique, the owner can bring it back and change it. If I'm abroad and I see someone wearing a C.P. garment I go up and introduce myself, and offer to buy them a drink."

A WEEKLY DIGEST OF THE WORLD'S FINANCIAL PRESS



FORBES
Bill Clinton's plans for American pensions

THE PRESIDENT proposes the feds invest social security surpluses in stocks, pumping in hundreds of billions of dollars in the next 15 years. e Berlin Wall may have fallen, the Soviet Union may have collapsed and China may welcome private foreign money, but the US government now wants to seminationise American corporations. Not since the Clintons' attempt to take over health care has there been such a Beltway power grab as this. Washington as venture capitalist?

Political pull will count more than shrewd appraisal of prospects. Our economy will become as nimble and innovative as those of Western Europe. Far better to phase in a new system where younger people would own their social security retirement accounts. This kind of people power is infinitely more democratic than Clinton's Soviet-style approach.



THE ECONOMIST
The restructuring of the European car industry

THESE INNOVATIONS will change the nature of the industry. Firms may be able to make production runs of less than 100,000 cars economical, without investing in giant presses at all.

The right way to encourage car makers to embrace such changes is for governments to get out of the way. That means allowing national champions to be taken over and old-fashioned plants to be shut; it also means fostering inward investment and unrestrained competition in retailing. The example to learn from is the steel industry. After years of Brussels-run production quotas, price-fixing and subsidies had done nothing to halt its decline, the entire apparatus of intervention was dismantled in the late Eighties. European steel makers are more competitive today than they have been for three decades. Car makers should follow suit.



FINANCIAL TIMES
Open skies talks between Britain and the United States

SIGNS THAT the US and the UK are ready to agree an open skies accord are to be welcomed, mainly because this could help open the door to a transatlantic open skies agreement between the US and EU. The first step towards transatlantic open skies should be the lifting of restrictions on foreign ownership, currently more onerous in the US.

Governments will have to acknowledge that good fares and service are more important than the flag on the tail.

Indeed, there is no role for government in the airline industry beyond ensuring safety and competition.

At a time when the motor, oil and pharmaceutical industries are consolidating, it is absurd that governments remain so determined to promote their national champions in the sky.



BUSINESS WEEK
When the idea of currency union for the Americas might work

NOW THAT the euro has had a successful debut, is it time to start thinking about a dollar bloc in the western hemisphere? A few brave policy-makers are suggesting that North America Free Trade Agreement members - the US, Mexico and Canada - at least consider the idea.

A North American version of the euro is unlikely, and probably unnecessary. The US economy dwarfs its Nafta neighbours, unlike the European Union which brings together 15 relatively similar, densely populated, industrialised states. And pushing for a new unit to replace the dollar, already a global reserve currency, is apt to be an unwinnable political crusade in the US...

Few in the Americas seem ready for a single currency. But if the euro gives the Europeans a competitive edge, the Nafta dollar may be inevitable.



WALL ST JOURNAL
Japan's new get-tough plan to restructure its debt-laden banks

EARLIER THIS month, Japan's vice minister of finance, Eisuke Sakakibara (aka Mr Yen) made the highly publicized remark that Japan's financial crisis would end "in the next week or two". That was yesterday and, despite Mr Sakakibara's optimism, Japan's nearly decade-long financial crisis is far from over.

While the plan developed by the FRA may be a step in the right direction, it does not go nearly far enough to impose market discipline on Japan's bloated banks. Neither does it address the fundamental problem plaguing Japan's financial system: lack of profitability due to immature and inefficient capital markets.

The government needs to "get tough" not only with banks, but also with other distortions in the Japanese economy - many of which the government itself has created.



BARRON'S
How gold could become a valuable commodity

NOW WE yield to no man in our conviction that gold is a perfect hedge against capital gains.

But wise Marc Faber says that you ought to buy some of the stuff as insurance against a global financial accident.

Marc is eager to confess that he's neither "a gold bug or an expert on the gold market". Nonetheless, he "believes the time has come to gradually shift some financial assets into gold".

We suspect that you could do worse than consider Marc's advice. For it is based largely on the contrast between the extraordinary complacency of investors, on the one hand and, on the other, a world economy increasingly susceptible to some grand, untoward event.

And nothing is more comforting, he notes, than insurance that you end up not using.



FORTUNE
Why Brazil is still a worry after the peso devaluation

A KEY reason Brazil is saddled with such a huge deficit is that in 1993 the constitution transferred more than a fifth of federal income tax revenue to the states, while leaving responsibility for social programmes like health care, education and sanitation with the federal government. State governors gorged themselves on this bonanza; the worst came to be known as "maharajas".

Brazil cannot restore its fortunes without ending such nonsense. But Cardoso has trouble mustering simple majorities; constitutional amendments require a two-thirds majority. Cardoso must persuade legislators to put the country's interests before their own - not an easy job even in older democracies. In this sense, Brazil's fate now lies with its political system, which is at least as volatile as its stock market. Get ready for more nasty surprises.

COVER STORY

BY JEREMY WARNER



As the world's largest investor in cyberspace, reportedly owning 25 per cent of the Internet, Masayoshi Son will either go down in history as a blinding visionary or a reckless fool. While all around him whisper about bubbles bursting, the man from Japan is shouting 'buy, buy, buy!' What does he know that we don't?

Son of the internet

Alan Greenspan, chairman of the US Federal Reserve, thinks investing in them is like buying a lottery ticket, and that most will fail. Bill Gates, of Microsoft, believes that these soar-away stocks should be trading on lower multiples than ordinary companies; he wouldn't advise even his worst enemy to invest at these levels. Rupert Murdoch thinks the phenomenon will destroy more businesses than it creates. And *The Economist* believes they are about to come "spectacularly crashing to Earth".

Everyone, it seems, is convinced the US craze for Internet companies is a financial bubble about to pop, and that when this happens, the consequences will be quite disastrous, not only for those who have invested in them at these apparently fantastic levels, but also for America's vibrant Silicon Valley and quite possibly for the world economy, as well. Everyone, that is, apart from those crazy Americans, who have taken to trading these stocks, generally on-line, as if this was a Saturday afternoon at the races; everyone, that is, apart from Masayoshi Son, or "Mr Internet" - the man who owns a quarter of cyberspace.

There is no doubting the bubble-like characteristics of the phenomenon. Individual Internet stocks have been known to change hands up to 10 times in a day, so frenzied is the level of trading, while it is not uncommon for the value of shares to go up by 50 per cent in a single trading session.

Some of the hottest Internet companies - Yahoo!, AOL and Amazon.com - have come to be valued, despite their insignificant profits, at more than Boeing and Disney.

So convinced is one leading US economist of the bubble-like characteristics of the Internet craze that he has labelled it "Tulip.com", after the great seventeenth century speculation in tulip bulbs. Barely have investors seemed so determined to lose sight of reality.

So is the Internet shares phenomenon a dangerous game of financial roulette, which is bound to end in tears, or is there more to it than that?

One person who believes there might be is Mr Son, a 41-year-old financier and entrepreneur who, with foresight the rest of us can only dream of, managed to take big shareholdings at an early stage in a whole raft of today's highest flying Internet companies. So inspired was his investment strategy, that he is now not only far and away the biggest investor worldwide in the Internet, but he can realistically claim to own 25 per cent of cyberspace. This may seem a meaningless boast, but shareholdings of around 50 per cent in Yahoo!, the most visible site on the Internet, Geo Cities, number three, and E-Trade, one of the US's biggest Internet stock brokers, are just the more visible and valuable in a portfolio that includes nearly 100 "pure" Internet companies. No one else comes close to that concentration of power in what has become the world's fastest growing industry.

"I admit that what's now going on is crazy hype," Mr Son says. But he won't call it a bubble. "Yes, of course there will be a correction, probably later this year or early next. The increase in valuations has obviously been far too fast. But we are long-term investors and this doesn't matter to us."

Mr Son's view of the Internet investment phenomenon is that we are only at the beginning. Today, the quoted Internet sector is worth about \$200bn. "My bet is that over the next 10 years, this sector will go to \$2,000 billion," he says with a degree of confidence that only other self-made billionaires could match. "I say it will rise ten-fold but that is only because I want to stick with a conservative forecast. Actually, I think twenty-fold is more realistic."

To back this forecast, Mr Son cites the example of the personal computer sector. Ten years ago, the collective stock market value of personal computer companies, including giants like Microsoft, Intel and Compaq, was \$38bn. Today they are worth more than \$2,000 billion. That's a degree of wealth transfer and creation unmatched in recent history. Is it really possible to repeat the trick with this second generation of technology and entrepreneurialism?

Of course it is, says Mr Son. At the World Economic Forum's annual meeting in Davos, Switzerland, last month, Mr Son asked a select audience of businessmen, bankers and economists which sector they thought would eventually be bigger: PCs or Internet? "Ninety-five per cent voted Internet," says Mr Son. "And they must be right. The PC market is limited to hardware, software and retail. The Internet is unlimited in size. From flowers to automobiles, the Internet will come to be key in virtually all industries."

"There are only two numbers in my vocabulary - zero and infinity. The Internet encompasses both these characteristics. It has zero variable cost; there is a zero decrease in accuracy as information is passed around. At the same time, it has infinite reach, infinite information and infinite product range. Neither of these things - zero or infinity - were possible in the past."

"Whoever understands these characteristics and incorporates them into their business model, will succeed in revolutionising their industries, and taking over from the old, established firms."

Prophetic, starry-eyed stuff. Is he right? The record, it might be said, speaks for itself. Mr Son is today one of Japan's leading entrepreneurs and very much the face of "new" Japan - self-made and mistrustful of the past.

Amazingly for one listed as among 10 to watch out for in the latest assessment published by *Forbes* magazine of the 200 richest people in the world, he still answers his own e-mails - and he does it religiously every day. If Japan has its own version of Bill Gates, Mr Son is it.

His beginnings, however, could hardly have been less auspicious. He was born into a poor family of Korean descent who lived in a shanty town on the edge of Toei city in southern Japan, where they eked a living from breeding pigs and chickens. Perhaps because of this, Mr Son shunned the traditions of Japanese education and, at the age of 16, went to California to complete his schooling, eventually ending up at Berkeley. There his entrepreneurial skills received an early boost when he invented, and subsequently sold to Sharp for \$1m, an early version of a multi-lingual pocket translator. His other business venture as a student was the import of used video games from Japan. He earned enough money to return to Japan and establish a business, Softbank - a distributor of PC software.

He was pushing at an open door. The PC market in Japan, unlike the US, was still in its infancy. Few others were doing it and Mr Son rapidly moved to a position where he was supplying some 50 per cent of the total retail market in Japan. From there, he moved into PC magazines, developing along the way an almost absurdly simple and ambitious strategy - to control as much of the world's digital future as he could. If nothing else about Mr Son is particularly Japanese, this kind of mission statement is - a straightforward, no-nonsense, statement of ambition and aim.

Inevitably it was to take Mr Son back to the US and that extraordinary hothouse of hi-tech entrepreneurial endeavour, Silicon Valley. By 1994, the Internet had already reached take-off point in the US and it was spawning a new generation of companies, so different in their nature, ethos and decentralised management style from anything that had gone before, that many of them did not seem like conventional businesses.

For many of these Internet entrepreneurs, their companies were a personal crusade, a hobby and a lifestyle venture.

Softbank examined more than 5,000 of them, the idea being to take big strategic stakes in up to 100.

"The thing to think about," Mr Son says, "is not that we risked our money in investing in 100 of these start-ups, but that we turned down 4,900 companies."

What were his criteria? "Yes, of course we looked at cash flow, but since many of these companies have no cash flow, this doesn't mean a lot. What we concentrated on was the business model - management and the strategy for growth."

Even then, these companies were not cheap. It is hard to tell exactly how much Softbank has invested in US Internet stocks. Mr Son says it was \$100m. Others say it was much more.

What is not in dispute is that with the explosive growth in valuations, the combined worth of Softbank's Internet investments is now in excess of \$15bn.

On top of that, there is an associated venture capital fund with a myriad of investments in smaller Internet enterprises. What singles Mr Son out from other Silicon Valley venture capitalists is that he invests only in pure leading-edge Internet companies, shunning software, hardware and backbone infrastructure.

At the start, the strategy worked like a dream. With the help of a team of former Nomura financiers, hired especially for the purpose, Mr Son would use the "cheap" money available in Japan to finance his American adventures in technology. Against traditionally high Japanese valuations, his investments did not seem expensive.

It has not all been a bed of roses. Despite the runaway success of many of his gambles, there has been persistent scepticism. Like many entrepreneurially led companies, Softbank is widely regarded in the investment community as being overburdened with debt. Its financial affairs are less than transparent and its accounting practices are, by Western standards, of dubious quality.

As a consequence, Softbank's share price has been a mirror image of the volatility of the Internet shares it invests in, climbing to dramatic heights before plunging downwards and recovering again.

The Japanese stock market's scepticism is amply demonstrated by the fact that today Softbank is valued at less than the worth of its stake in Yahoo! alone. Mr Son regards this as "ridiculous", but it is testament to the degree of concern in the investment community that the last *Financial Times* cutting on Mr Son described his company as "the troubled Japanese multimedia conglomerate". That article appeared more than a year ago and Mr Son would no doubt claim that the subsequent rise and rise of traded Internet stocks has more than vindicated him. Nonetheless, the doubts remain. Even the biggest and best Internet companies still devour, rather than generate, capital, and Mr Son's exposure is such that he has to try and feed that appetite. Is he not in danger of over-extending himself?

Perhaps, perhaps not. But on one thing Mr Son is not alone in his thinking. Everyone agrees that the Internet is going to transform the way business is conducted and organised. It is, as yet, uncertain whether that revolution will be as awe inspiring and all-encompassing as, say, the development of the railway and the motor car, or the discovery of electricity.

On one level, e-commerce and the Internet are just alternative methods of distribution. Nothing very exciting about that, it might be said. On the other hand, the Internet allows for a degree of competition and price transparency never before seen. What's more, it brings this about on a global scale. If that might seem to be bad for the profitability of businesses and, by extension, for the value of companies, just dwell on this: One of Mr Son's recent investments is Buy.com, a company which incorporates a zero or even negative margin into its business model. Who, in their right mind, would dream of starting a business which sells products for less than it bought them for? An Internet entrepreneur, of course. The idea is that the difference in price is recouped from advertising.

The Internet's share of total advertising worldwide is much less than 1 per cent. Mr Son and others like him think this will rise exponentially with the growth of e-commerce. "If you see an advertisement on your TV set and you are wearing your pyjamas at the time, what is the next action you can take?" he asks. On the Internet you can purchase that item immediately, rather than waiting till the next morning.

And still Mr Son's Japanese investors, who allow Softbank's shares to trade at such a huge discount to its underlying assets, don't seem to get it. "They will eventually," Mr Son predicts confidently.

'INTERNET SHARES WILL RISE TEN-FOLD'

Masayoshi Son's thoughts on the future of Internet companies:

"Stock prices have risen too fast and there is bound to be a correction, either later this year or next."

"On a long-term view, this correction will be like nothing. Internet companies are the companies of the future."

"Over the next 10 years, the stock market value of the Internet sector, currently some \$200bn, will

rise ten-fold as existing companies grow and their ranks are swelled by newcomers."

"I am a conservative person and this is a conservative estimate. Actually, it is more realistic to expect a twenty-fold rise."

"This bet is based on what has happened to the PC

sector over the past 10 years. In 1988, it was worth just \$38bn, including Microsoft, Intel, Compaq. Today it is worth \$2,000 billion worldwide. The Internet sector is worth \$200bn today so there is easily scope for it to grow to \$2,000 billion."

"The Internet sector will eventually be much larger

than the PC sector. The Internet has the capacity to expand into virtually all business areas, so it will be much larger."

"Whoever understands the characteristics of the Internet - its capacity for infinite reach and zero variable cost - and builds their business model around it, will succeed while traditional business models will fail."

"The biggest business growth area on the Internet will be e-commerce."

YAHOO!

MANAGEMENT ISSUES

Computers are transforming the economy

There are two general views about the impact of new information technologies on the economy. On the one hand, you get the cynics who think it is all hype and balderdash, and that nothing has changed fundamentally. And on the other, there has been more growth with less inflation than the experience of the past generation has led us to expect. There might be all sorts of explanations for this, including deregulation and jobs market flexibility, but advances in technology are another candidate. After all,

almost all the long-term economic growth there has ever been in the world has been attributable to technological progress. Yet even if things are genuinely different now, it does not, as some enthusiasts seem to think, mean the laws of economics have been suspended. New structures of production and costs in the information age are amenable to analysis. Some of the features enthusiasts tend to pick out are the least interesting. For example, the pace of technical change is certainly very rapid now: the value of computer power increases 32-fold every decade, while the value of car power grew four-fold every decade at the same stage of the combustion engine revolution. More interesting this time around are the special features of information. Much information is

non-excludable - if it is made available, there is nothing to prevent people who have not paid for it from using it. There are some technical fixes for this, such as the set-top boxes that control access to broadcast TV programmes. But it is impossible to prevent a Chinese manufacturer, say, from copying a CD or a dress design. Battles over piracy and intellectual property rights will be a recurring theme of the information economy. Secondly, many people can use information at the same time, unlike traditional goods. The marginal cost of information - the cost of serving an extra customer - is therefore zero in one sense. The efficiency of the economy demands that the price is zero, too, because there is no consumption of scarce resources. But if the price were zero, the information would not be

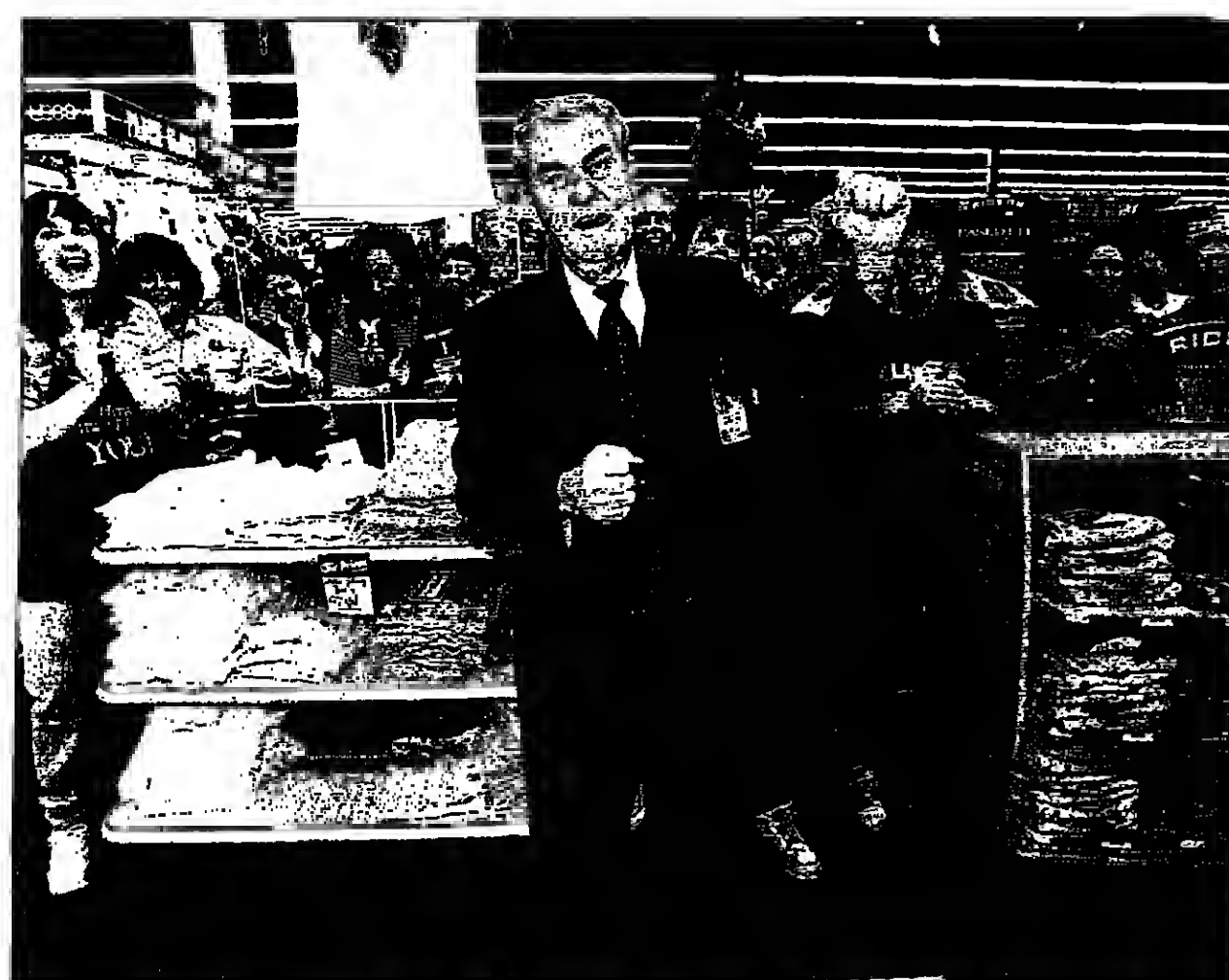


DIANE COYLE
More has changed than the usual economic statistics would lead us to believe - much new input is simply not measured

provided because the initial costs are often very high. Thirdly, much information is not transparent. You don't know how good it is until you have actually tried it, and if you know what it is you already have it. Not surprisingly, these features call for very different sorts of business strategies. One of the best recent books on what they ought to be is *Information Rules* by Hal Varian and Carl Shapiro. Much of their analysis focuses on the tension between giving away your information so that people know what you have to offer, and recovering your costs. For instance, one possible strategy is to give away samples to encourage people to buy the full or premium product. Price discrimination between different types of customer is another fruitful strat-

egy, such as making delayed information much cheaper than real-time information - rather as paperback books are cheaper than original hardback editions. In addition, Varian and Shapiro also emphasise the power of being first in the market in information industries: there is more value to something the more other people are using it. The fax machine is a classic example. Yours is no good unless other people have one too. Microsoft Windows is another. The analytical framework provides some justification for the loss-making strategies adopted by so many e-businesses. They are spending on being first in the market and building up a customer base: if all your costs are upfront, the only way to reduce unit costs is to sell more units. The policy implications are as

profound as the lessons for business: we might be doomed to an environment of serial monopoly, where the biggest player in each market has to be kept in check by the competition authorities rather than direct competitors. And a key challenge for governments will be creating an environment that fosters as many new start-ups as possible, because serial entrepreneurship is a necessary corrective to serial monopoly. As Bill Gates has often said, the biggest threat to his business is not the Justice Department but some geek hunched over a keyboard. This is indeed a different sort of economy. In the long run, it will be a more prosperous one. Whether this is cause for feeling boundless optimism about the short run is another matter entirely. d.coyle@independent.co.uk



The president of Wal-Mart, David Glass, leads employees at a Pennsylvania store in the company song

FOCUS

Wal-Mart set to conquer Britain

By RUPERT CORNWELL

ONCE UPON a time ago - more precisely the 20-odd years that constitute an eternity in the history of the American suburban landscape - Route 159 in Illinois south of St. Louis was a gentle semi-rural highway joining the interstate to St. Louis. Today it is Anywhere USA: a mall-to-mall traffic jam stretching for miles, a carno of end-of-millennium sprawl, a line of huge flat temples of consumption stretching to the horizon. Once there were fields of sweet Illinois corn, reputed to be the finest in America, but they have long vanished beneath parking lots the size of Wembley Stadium. This is urban development, American style - what happens when land is plentiful and cheap, the car rules and competition is cut-throat. This is the America of Wal-Mart, the world's largest, most successful retailer. Just possibly, in a not-too-distant future, it could be coming to farmland near you. In Britain we must tremble at the prospect.

"Wal-Martisation" comes at a price. Before the interstates came, when Americans still lived in cities, Edwardsville was a bustling commercial centre, a staging post along US66 as that celebrated highway prepared to cross the Mississippi and strike for the great expanses of the West. The place is still there, of course, with its county court house, its churches and public library. They've even put up new bank buildings and public offices. But where there once was retail bustle, virtual silence reigns. The shops have disappeared, crushed by the out-of-town supermarkets lined along Route 159, vanquished by the likes of Dillons, K-Mart, and Toys "R" Us. But above all, by Wal-Mart.

Now Wal-Mart, having conquered America and spread tentacles into Canada, Mexico, Latin America, Asia, and most recently Germany, is sizing up our green, pleasant and crowded little land. The question is, do we want it? The company is monument to one of this century's most remarkable businessmen. Sam Walton started his discount stores in Arkansas in 1962, convinced that smalltown America was ripe for a discount retailing revolution. By the time he died in 1992, sales had risen to \$44bn, and "Mr Sam", as he was known to his employees, was the richest man in America. His secrets were a ruthlessly efficient computerised inventory and distribution sys-

taking. We suffer, we are told, from some of the highest prices in Europe for groceries, car accessories, electronic goods, appliances, products which are the backbone of Wal-Mart's business. Our retailers are said to have grown fat and lazy in a protected world of high margins and low competition. So why not welcome this American invader, and enjoy American-style prices and American-style customer service? It is no accident that Wal-Mart, driven by the ambition of its executive David Glass to turn itself into a world food and



tem, no-frills marketing, and prices to beat anyone. Unusually in a land where rapacious shareholders bear down on over-worked employees, the humblest sales clerk was an "associate" who received shares in the company, allowing him too to cash in on Wal-Mart's explosive growth. Above all, the customer was king. And Sam Walton, with a personal fortune of \$23bn, lived like his customers. His frugality was legendary. He was happiest inspecting his stores in person, driving a battered Ford pickup with his hard dogs caged in the back. Wal-Mart today has 2,700 stores in America alone, employing 600,000 people. Its global sales last year reached \$137bn or £24bn, equivalent to more than a tenth of Britain's entire gross domestic product. But Sam Walton kept his headquarters in a warehouse in Bentonville, Arkansas, 50 miles from the nearest interstate. He was an American original. Which is why his methods may not flourish so easily here. You could conclude that Britain is ripe for Wal-Mart's

match Coca-Cola, made Germany its first target in Europe. The Germans, until recently saddled by laws which closed shops on Saturday afternoons, are retailers to make the even the much-maligned British look good. But in 14 months, Wal-Mart has acquired WertKauf and Interspar, two chains with 95 hypermarkets between them. WertKauf has stores similar in size and appearance to the SuperCenters Wal-Mart is introducing in the US, emporia with 200,000 sq ft of space, for the first time adding groceries to Wal-Mart's traditional range (making Wal-Mart one of the top five food retailers in the US overnight). Britain could be the next bridgehead. But the transatlantic invaders will not find it easy. Even in the US, where the discount market was increasingly saturated, Wal-Mart seemed to lose its way after the death of "Mr Sam". Today, with the growing success of the SuperCenters and plans for a new generation of smaller in-town stores to mop up surviving high street competitors, the company is flourishing again.

For these reasons, if and when Wal-Mart does cross the Channel, it is unlikely to set up from scratch, and Britain's green fields will be safe. It is likely to repeat its tactics in Germany and buy existing chains, with Asda or Safeway widely tipped. Booker is a cash and carry chain that also could be in its sights. But even then there will be cultural obstacles. For all the current nostalgia for a smalltown America, crushed beneath the megastores' jackboot, not enough people are really care enough to halt the process. In Edwardsville they remember the downtown drugstore of a generation ago, and shed small tears for places like Auerbach's, the main street clothing store where the local hotshots used to go. But the suburbs, the malls and the Wal-Mart march relentlessly on. Across America there are thousands of Edwardsvilles. Britain is a nation of city dwellers, who wish we lived in the country. We moan about high prices but almost certainly will refuse to pay the price required to lower them. For Wal-Mart and its like, Edwardsville, Illinois, may have been a pushover. Edwardsville, Mid Glamorgan, would not be.

MY BIGGEST MISTAKE

I forgot we were mail order

MY BIGGEST mistake was to lose sight of our core competency and move into manufacturing, after we had been going for seven years. A lot of our customers were asking for us to supply PCs; we sold software, printers, scanners, and it was the final piece of the jigsaw. I started out cold-calling, knocking on doors on an industrial estate, selling anything to do with computers. After a year I found some really good software in America and started to import it. Then we grew into a mail-order company. In April 1997, we started building PCs. We had a customer base of around 300,000 and 15 stores. Customers were asking us for PCs and we had two options: either to sell major brand names or build our own. We decided to build our own. We had a ready market, and



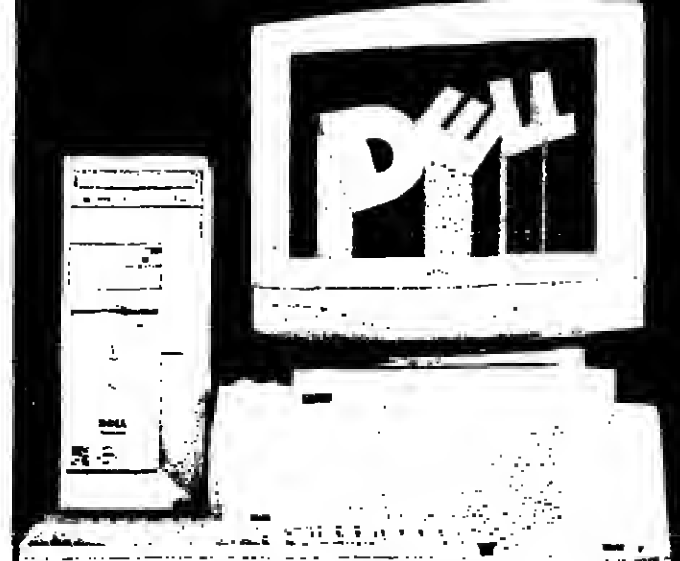
Steve Bennett, 33, founded Software Warehouse in his early 20s after being made redundant from his job with a small computer dealer. His company, the UK's fastest growing over the past four years, now has 350 employees with an annual turnover of more than £100m. He has also written a book, 'Serve to Win', and is launching a computer magazine, 'Internet Monthly'.

give it more of a chance. But by May, it was risking the whole ship. We were all focusing on getting manufacturing working. You have this tangible you can see - the money you lose - but there's also an intangible; the lost opportunities. In the end, we laid off 19 people. It was painful. In nine years, I had never had to make anyone redundant. Until you close it down, you can gloss it up as an investment. The day you close, you are writing off that money. But if we hadn't, I'm convinced we wouldn't have got back to the old strength. We still launch subsidiaries like, *Internet Monthly*. But we have taken an existing director, who has set it up as his own project. The rest of the board don't need to get involved. It stands on its own two feet. rachel@trackray.co.uk

We sold quite a few computers, about 1,000 a month, but we were spending a lot on marketing. Another thing we did wrong was that we didn't put a director on it at board level. We shared responsibility, and started de-focusing from our core business. In January 1998 we had a board meeting and I wanted to close it; others said we had to

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BY NAOMI MARKS & JOHN DAVISON

The uncertainty that greeted the accession of Jonathan Harmsworth (right) to the chair of The Daily Mail and General Trust has passed. It's very much business as usual at the media group, with share prices rising and now a place among the elite of the FTSE 100. But with its new-found status comes a nagging old question: can a multi-national company run along family lines remain intact in the global media village?

DMGT



For most companies, joining the elite ranks of the FTSE 100 share index, the Premier League of Britain's blue chip companies, would be a cause for unqualified celebration. But not necessarily so at Daily Mail and General Trust, which achieved the accolade earlier this month.

For Jonathan Harmsworth, the young charmer who stepped into the hot seat last September after the untimely death of his father, Lord Rothermere, achieving the stock market valuation that qualifies him for the FTSE has a double edge. With it should come a top-drawer City following, deeper capital and renewed investor interest in the company. But alongside these benefits there are also disciplines. And many of these are about the last thing that this last great British newspaper dynasty wants, or feels that it needs.

It is a curious paradox that the group that owns the Daily Mail, that bastion of middle-England certainty, can itself appear to be a mass of contradictions. Ask senior journalists how they view Daily Mail and General Trust (DMGT) and the response will nearly always come laced with admiration, albeit often grudging. Here there is, they will say, a media owner with an uncanny knack of riding the Zeitgeist.

Its papers have editorial budgets that most others can only dream about, and operates under the assumption that it can have whatever it wants when it wants them. If there is a problem, money is thrown at it in a way that can seem profligate, or like the actions of a spoilt child. But it is a policy which, while at odds with most Fleet Street thinking, seems unerringly to deliver. The facts seem to speak for themselves.

Latest circulation figures show the usual modest but steady rises for both the Daily Mail and the Mail on Sunday. More significantly they demonstrate total domination of their respective markets. Whatever anyone may think of the products, together they are a great journalistic success story. Equally, few in the City would argue with this picture. Last week the company posted record results, with operating profits up 34 per cent to £214m.

Yet ask any authority on corporate behaviour and the answer couldn't differ more. DMGT is well out of kilter with the modern age, they say, pointing to the group's archaic dual share structure which allows the founding Harmsworth family to use shareholders' cash without relinquishing any control.

With this comes a degree of shyness, or downright secrecy, about operations which would only normally be associated with a private company. Alone among the big media groups it has no press office, for example. Interested journalists are directed to its corporate affairs office, itself run by a member of the family clan - Vivyan Harmsworth, a cousin of the chairman.

Most observers would agree, however, that in part this very closed family nature has been behind both the group's recent success, and previous vulnerability. The dynasty has its origins in the launch of the Daily Mail in 1896 by

HEADLINES



Founded: Roots go back to the 1896 launch of the Daily Mail by Alfred Harmsworth, later Lord Northcliffe (above). Incorporated 1922.
Divisions: Associated Newspapers, DMG New Media, Northcliffe Newspapers, Euromoney Publications, Harmsworth Media, DMG Information.
Employees: 14,000
Market capitalisation: £1.6bn
Turnover: £1.4bn (up 18% on 1997)
Operating profit: £213.6m (up 34% on 1997)
Earnings per share: 135.1p

the journalist and adventurer Alfred Harmsworth, later Lord Northcliffe. His great idea was to produce a newspaper for the then burgeoning middle classes, and it is one that has guided the group ever since.

While he provided the journalistic drive, his brother Harold, the first Lord Rothermere, provided the business acumen. Within 20 years the fledgling empire of Associated Newspapers owned the world's largest stable of magazines and more than half the titles on Fleet Street - including The Times and The Daily Mirror.

When Alfred died childless in 1922, the succession passed to the Rothermere line, and Harold in turn handed it on to his third son, Esmond, on his death in 1940. The elder two brothers had been killed in the First World War.

Always the reluctant press baron whose real ambitions lay in politics, Esmond presided over the apparently terminal decline of the group. A report commissioned in 1970 said that the Daily Mail could no longer compete with its arch rival the Daily Express. Losses on Associated's three titles at the time - the Mail, the Daily Sketch and the Evening News were heading for £14m a year.

Esmond had begun to negotiate a merger with the Express, but when talks broke down he resigned and handed over to his son, Vere, the third Lord Rothermere. His relaunch of the Mail as a mid-market tabloid, increasingly aimed at the emerging market of younger women, laid the foundation for the group's current success.

The past 18 months, however, have not been easy. Late 1997 saw the unexpected death of Sir David English, the Mail's editor-in-chief. His working partnership with the third Lord Rothermere, which spanned three decades, has always been seen as the basis of the revival. Then, last September, came the

equally unexpected death of Rothermere himself. So the dynasty fell prematurely into the hands of his son, the then 30-year-old Jonathan.

Both deaths were followed by sharp drops in the DMGT share price. The last was fuelled by fears that the new Lord Rothermere, only three years into his schooling in the ways of the company, was far from ready for the top job.

However, under the steady hands of long-time chief executive, Charles Sinclair, the share price has, since last October, climbed back higher and higher. The message to the City is clear: it is business as usual.

Entry into the company top league, however, brings with it unwelcome City scrutiny, where DMGT's corporate structure finds few friends. There are 100 million DMGT shares issued, and the Harmsworth family owns 80 per cent of the five million that come with voting rights. The present Lord Rothermere alone controls more than 56 per cent of the Group's voting shares. The only other FTSE 100 company to retain such a dual share structure is the merchant bank Schroders. (Interestingly, Charles Sinclair is also a non-executive director of Schroders).

Such structures, "go against the principles of corporate governance and well established practice in all the developed world," says Chris Baldry, manager of the voting issues service for the National Association of Pension Funds. PIRC, the corporate governance consultancy, recently produced a report highly critical of DMGT. It states that though its directors believe the company fully complies with the Cadbury Committee's code of best practice, PIRC has a number of reservations.

On the dual share structure, Stuart Bell, PIRC research director, is uncompromising. "It's unsustainable that they should retain the position," he says. Yet retain it they will. "I see no reason for change," says DMGT finance director Peter Williams. "A small number of institutional investors who will not buy our non-voting shares, but that's their prerogative. It's caveat emptor." He adds: "Media seems to be a business where you can take a long-term view and we can do that. We're not driven by the next set of results. If we need to invest in a product we will do that, even if it means hitting the earnings."

Friends of the new chairman say that fears about his preparedness for the task were themselves premature. They describe him as very well tutored in the group - right from having managed a paper mill in Canada - and keen to make his personal mark. Indeed they say he is more willing than his father to be seen as the power behind decisions, where the previous Lord Rothermere preferred to smile benignly in the background.

With Claudia, his bright Oxford graduate wife, behind him and with a son of his own, the dynasty seems secure for the next generation. That is what you call long term planning. Whether money will be spent on the newspapers with quite the same abandon could be interesting to watch. One friend described Jonathan as "slightly frugal" by

Jonathan Harmsworth, the fourth Lord Rothermere, chairman DMGT. Educated at Gordonstoun, Kent School, Connecticut, USA; and Duke University, USA.

In 1993 Harmsworth joined Mirror Group where he gained valuable experience working in editorial, marketing and management. He was inducted into DMGT ways in the Group's regional newspaper arm, Northcliffe Newspapers, before becoming managing director of the Evening Standard in 1997. At 31, Harmsworth inherited his position five years before his father had planned. While he still has much to learn, he already wants to introduce a more dynamic approach into DMGT.

Harmsworth keeps a low profile and has so far refused all interview requests. He owns more than half the voting shares in the Group. Married with two children, one of whom is named Vere.



Paul Dacre, executive director DMGT (above). Dacre joined the Daily Mail in 1980 and progressed steadily through the ranks, becoming Evening Standard editor in 1991. A year later he was made Daily Mail editor after The Times tried to

poach him. Promoted to editor-in-chief of Associated Newspapers and elevated to the board in 1998, following the death of Sir David English. He is renowned as a demanding workaholic and is a devoted family man. More reserved than Sir David was, he nonetheless commands huge respect across Fleet Street for both his newspaper and strategic vision skills. Aged 50.

Charles Sinclair, chief executive DMGT. An accountant, Sinclair joined the group in 1975, the board in 1988 and was appointed chief executive in 1989. Described as relaxed and urbane and "not into power but into success". His is seen as an important guiding and steadying hand as the new Lord Rothermere finds his feet though another accountant, finance director Peter Williams, is the face DMGT presents to the City. Aged 50.

nature. One story told is of how he turned up to a golf tournament without any balls to play with, on the assumption that someone else would be providing them.

Pressure to change, analysts agree, is unlikely to come unless the Group hits hard times - and for a long time things have gone rather well. It took 20 years for the Mail to overtake the Express after the 1971 re-launch, but its position now appears unassailable. Even journalists who disagree with its political position, and its owner's intolerance of in-house union activity, commend the paper for its sheer professionalism and the golden touch of its editors.

The third Lord Rothermere also launched the Mail on Sunday, now almost as impregnable as the daily. And the group succeeded in retaining its supremacy in London with the Evening Standard in the mid-Eighties by briefly resurrecting the long-dead Evening News in a devastatingly effective spoiling operation against Robert Maxwell's fledgling London Daily News.

Perhaps his greatest achievement, though, was in consolidating

the Group, folding its national newspaper wing, Associated Newspapers, into DMGT, which had been, in essence, the personal investment portfolio of the Rothermeres.

Ridding DMGT of all its non-media stocks, the Group was transformed in the late Eighties into the coherent media company it is today.

As well as its national papers, DMGT today includes Northcliffe Newspapers, the UK's second biggest regional newspaper publisher; exhibitions, radio, Teletext, and electronic data businesses; a New Media division producing mass-market Internet sites and a majority shareholding in Euromoney Publications. The whole ship is run smoothly and without fanfare from its Kensington HQ.

Laura Larghi, an analyst with Paribas, agrees that there can be few complaints about DMGT's performance now, but says the future is a different question.

"Euromoney is the best part of the company. It really is a jewel. But it's just one part of the company. DMGT should be a bit more aggressive. They have the money and can fund other sources of profitability. The newspapers can grow organically but not much more."

Another analyst backs her and says acquisitions will be the key to the group retaining its top ranking. One senior insider describes DMGT as traditionally "not entrepreneurial, just very, very staid", but says there are signs that the new chairman may want to change that.

He believes the group depends too much on one product (newspapers), and one market (the UK), and says DMGT must look to, other countries and activities.

Electronic media, radio and exhibitions are among the areas the new Lord Rothermere is looking to for long-term growth.

Recent acquisitions include Why Publications and Radio Mercury.

Peter Williams concedes that recent successes can be put down to the buoyant UK economy and the strength of advertising, and admits that the pace cannot continue. Hence the importance of diversification. But he stresses that newspapers will remain the heart of the company.

Next month's film launch of Metro, a daily London free newspaper to be distributed at tube stations, seems to confirm that picture.

It will also be seen as the first real contribution of Jonathan to the group's fortunes - not least because he was one of the small group of five senior managers who decided to go with the project. With a sudden change in editors of the title last week, and News International working on a similar title, this is unlikely to prove easy terrain.

Still, there has only been one notable failure in recent years - that of the cable venture Channel One which folded late last year after failing to achieve sufficient subscriptions. Pressure from the City for DMGT to change its quiet, old-fashioned ways may still, therefore, be some time in coming.

THE PLAYER: CHRIS GREEN, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OF VIRGIN RAIL

Right man to tackle 'mission impossible'

BY PHILIP THORNTON



THE LOGO on the side of the computer-generated image of the new tilting train destined for Virgin's West Coast main line says it all: "Mission Impossible". Chris Green, the high-flier who turned around three divisions of British Rail, has been hired to sort out problems at the country's most unpopular train company.

Mr Green, 55, faces an uphill task. Virgin owns two of the most elderly and problematic rail franchises. The West Coast line from London to Glasgow has had little work done on it since it was electrified in the Sixties. CrossCountry runs trains that connect all corners of the UK and cover distances of up to 800 miles, making them liable to delays.

Last year the franchises attracted more passenger complaints than any other operator and the latest performance figures showed the flagship London-to-Glasgow service had the worst punctuality record in the country, with almost 20 per cent of trains running late. The letters columns of the national papers are full of horror stories from

passengers. Virgin is a butt of the nation's jokes to an extent that only British Rail could rival.

The business probably reached its nadir at the Labour Party's annual conference when Virgin failed to deliver party delegates to Blackpool. Richard Branson went on the radio to tell shocked listeners: "We fucked up, we fucked up badly."

The appointment of Mr Green is a sign that Mr Branson is desperate to restore the reputation of the train business, whose performance threatens to undermine the Virgin brand. Mr Green has been hired on a five-year contract with a two-fold mission - to deliver a markedly improved service on the existing network and ensure the £1.8bn worth of new trains will be delivered on time. He should be qualified for both, as one insider praised his "exceptional" marketing ability and his track record on train procurement.

The first task looks the more challenging. Mr Green said he would launch a "back-to-basics" strategy to improve punctuality. He has em-

barked on a 100-day mission to get views from staff and passengers about the way forward. "I want added professionalism in everything we do. Whatever we do, let's do it well and let's get rid of those silly little mistakes that have annoyed customers. Running out of tea is just unforgivable," he said. "People have taken their eye off the ball while making large train orders or contracting out work to third parties. We have to get back to basics."

"It will be a process of continuous improvement for the next few months. It is about getting the boring details right. I would hope to be able to show an improvement every three months."

Virgin recently provoked an outcry by increasing first-class fares to Manchester by 10 per cent and to Birmingham by 19 per cent while offering better deals on tickets booked three days in advance.

Mr Green said Virgin's prices had been lower than other operators, but added: "I would not expect us to have higher prices." He had "four or

five" new initiatives up his sleeve but said it was too early to go into details as he only officially took over the reins from Brian Barrett, who is retiring, on Monday.

Despite Virgin's poor reputation, he said that only 30 per cent of delays were caused by Virgin, with the rest down to other operators, Railtrack or acts of God. Under the deal for the new trains, the train builder Alstom would take responsibility for the existing fleet under a contract that demanded a 33 per cent cut in delays due to train faults. He insisted he wanted to build a new relationship with Railtrack, which is spending £1.2bn on the West Coast line, following recent arguments over who was to blame for falling standards. "Throwing rocks at each other may feel good but it won't solve a single problem."

The two new fleets of trains are the key to the long-term success of the Virgin rail business, which is now 49 per cent owned by Stagecoach. About £1.2bn is being spent on a fleet of 53 140mph tilting trains for the

West Coast line which will achieve the "holy grail" of Glasgow in under four hours, said a spokesman. The rest is being spent on 78 diesel trains for the CrossCountry route.

Mr Green has been here before. From 1992 to 1994 he was managing director of InterCity, the profitable high-speed train business of BR that includes both CrossCountry and West Coast. Ironically, the man in charge of the West Coast line at the time was Ivor Warburton, who resigned last week as director of business development. Mr Green said the pair remained friends.

His successes in turning around the fortunes of ScotRail and the creation of the Network SouthEast business led to him being hailed as the best chairman BR never had. He quit in protest at the plans to break up the network at privatisation. His departure in 1995 for the top job at English Heritage took the industry by surprise.

Observers say Mr Green's career with BR made him the right man for the top job at Virgin Rail. One said:

"He has an impressive track record. He is probably responsible for the procurement of more new trains during this period than any time since. His no-nonsense attitude and exceptional marketing ability is widely believed to be a long-needed counter to some of the more disastrous promotions dreamed up by Virgin's novice marketing people."

Mr Green declined to reveal his pay package but he said he had been given a "fair deal" by Mr Branson. He said he would have been interested in the job of chairman of the Strategic Rail Authority, the new body being set up by the Deputy Prime Minister, John Prescott, to regulate the railways.

However, it is unlikely he would have been accepted for the post following a Commons Public Accounts Committee report last year that said he was unfit to hold public office. This followed his high-profile departure from English Heritage amid accusations of inaccurate expenses claims. However, there was no suggestion of any fraud.

A WEEKLY SURVEY IN WHICH MARKET LEADERS PICK THEIR MARKET LEADER

BOOK OF THE WEEK

The alchemy of growth
by Mehrdad Baghai,
Stephen Coley and
David White
Orion Business, £20

THE COMPUTER industry is known for its ability to give those operating in it the thrills and spills of a roller-coaster ride. But even by those standards, the experience of the US company Compaq in the early Nineties looks extreme. A 25 per cent sales rise in 1990 became a 9 per cent fall in 1991 and operating income halved. The company slashed 12 per cent of its workforce and replaced the chief executive and co-founder, Rod Canion.

His replacement, Eckhard Pfeiffer, led a drastic restructuring - reducing costs, speeding product development and extending the product line to compete with the "clones" of IBM-compatible personal computers that had transformed its marketplace. According to Mehrdad Baghai, Stephen Coley and David White, the three McKinsey & Co management consultants who are the authors of *The Alchemy of Growth*, Mr Pfeiffer was "earning the right and building his team's resolve to grow".

Citing his introduction of a "performance culture" making managers strictly accountable and highly rewarding high performers, they credit him with an impressive turnaround by the end of 1992 - so creating the conditions for a growth curve that saw sales rise 45 per cent and net income grow at 58 per cent a year between 1992 and 1996. The graphic story is seen as an illustration of how companies lose the ability to grow. "The right and the resolve to grow are preconditions for success in the pursuit of growth," say Baghai, Coley and White.

But it is not that simple. The authors cite Reynolds & Reynolds, a company facing increasing competition at the low-margin end just as it focused on more valuable products and systems. A new chief executive concentrated on a handful of customer markets and built "leadership positions" in them to stabilise operating income. Managers talk of this need to concentrate on several things at once as "keeping balls in the air".

But since the authors are management consultants, they have developed a concept, "the three horizons of growth". This is a "three-stage pipeline" seen as useful in allowing distinctions between the "embryonic, emergent and mature phases of a business's life cycle".

Horizon 1 involves extending and defending core businesses - and is seen as vital for generating the cash resources for growth. Horizon 2 covers building emerging businesses - the fast-moving, entrepreneurial ventures in which a concept is taking root or growth accelerating. Horizon 3 contains "the seeds of tomorrow's businesses - options on future opportunities".

The problem is that, though the three horizons pay off over different time frames, when they pay off has little to do with when they require management attention. Accordingly, the authors say, managers must deal with them all concurrently.

This is a typical consultants' attempt to mystify what is fundamentally obvious. Any manager who had the time to think would believe he or she had to pay attention to coming up with ideas at the same time as ensuring that existing business chugged along as well as possible.

But in throwing light on the mechanics of growth, the book is likely to prove highly valuable. Indeed, most people are so convinced that growth is "a good thing" that they have forgotten that not all growth is profitable.

The McKinsey team point to how Nokia in the Eighties diversified into a whole range of industries only to come unstuck. Significantly, the company's spectacular growth in recent years has come through concentrating on a particular market and coming up with innovative ways of serving it.

ROGER TRAPP

TOP TEN BUSINESS BOOKS

1	The Little Book of Calm at Work Paul Wilson (Penguin)	£2.50
2	Losing My Virginity Richard Branson (Virgin)	£20
3	The Crisis of Global Capitalism George Soros (Little, Brown)	£17.99
4	Business Studies For You David Needham & Robert Dransfield (Stanley Thornes)	£13.50
5	The One Minute Manager Kenneth Blanchard & Spencer Johnson (HarperCollins)	£5.99
6	Seven Habits of Highly Effective People Stephen R Covey (Simon & Schuster)	£10.99
7	The Hungry Spirit Charles Handy (Arrow)	£7.99
8	The Equal Opportunities Guide Phil Clements & Tony Spinks (Kogan Page)	£13.99
9	Management Theory and Practice, 5th edn G A Cole (Lets)	£12.95
10	The Dilbert Principle Scott Adams (Bantam)	£6.99

Compiled by Bookwatch Ltd

Who's doing the business in... advertising?

Chris Powell

Chairman, BNP DDB

The person I am most impressed with in the advertising industry is Jeremy Bulmore who is non-executive partner at WPP. He came to the top via the creative ladder which is the very best route in my opinion because if you can write and do your own ads you are practically on your way to being a one-man agency. But anyway, my reason for choosing Jeremy is simple. For me he is more insightful than anyone else in the industry.

Stevie Spring

Managing Partner,

Young and Rubicam

Maurice Saatchi because he has effected the most spectacular growth of an agency in memory. He was the driving force behind the "revenge" creation of the M&C Saatchi agency. Only someone with his focus could have done this; he sat back and thought "I want to number among the top 10 agencies in the UK; I want admiration." He fixed his sights on growth at whatever cost and he achieved it. He's up front and he's in your face. You just can't fail to admire him and the fact that in four years M&C Saatchi has gone from scratch to a place in our top ten agencies is a testament to his abilities.

Brett Gosper

Chief Executive,

Euro RSCG Wnek Gosper

The two people who stand out in the advertising business at the moment are Mark Wuek, who is our executive director, and Robin Wight who is the chairman of WCRS. I have picked these two in particular because they share a quality which is fantastically useful in the business these days - they are what I would term "hybrid" advertising people. There tends to be a sharp distinction between those who work on the creative side and those who work on the business side. For me, these two men have managed to combine both creative strategy and business acumen. It really is a fantastically rare combination. With their business sense, flair and strategic tendencies, they could be one man advertising agencies.

Mark Lund

Managing Director,

Delaney Fletcher Bozell

There have been three seminal figures in advertising. I should probably start by naming Bill Bernbach who was in advertising in the Fifties and Sixties in America. These were the days when advertising was polite. Bill brought the voice of Jewish New York to the headlines. He introduced a manner of appealing to the consumer which was short, punchy and catchy. Rather than having the voice of an estate agent, advertising was given the language of the sandwich bar. He created a whole new mood and introduced a refreshing immediacy to advertising.

Second I would pick Frank Lowe. He was a groundbreaker in advertising because he

founded the belief in the UK that creative work was worth fighting for. Rather than following to the letter the client's demands, Frank thought it was vital to respect the integrity of the artefact. Although he was ultimately doing the client's work he thought it was important to realise that the client doesn't always know best. For example the client could decide that they wanted the smallest thing changed but Frank realised it would affect the entire balance of a campaign if even the smallest detail was changed. He was the first apostle of the advertiser as expert.

Finally, there's David Abbott of Abbott, Mead and Vickers. Twenty years ago, David Abbott brought a middle-class sensibility to advertising. David believed that quality was worth looking at with a certain degree of intelligence and respect. For example, the supermarket campaign always used to be based on the pile it high, sell it cheap mentality. But David said no, let's do it another way and focused on aspects such as the variety and quality of food available. His wasn't an entirely polysyllabic form of advertising but it was more so than previously. It's implicit in his ads for Sainsbury's, BT and Volvo among other things. But to reiterate, the important aspect of David's attitude to advertising was that he insisted on a respect for the people to whom he was talking.

Michael Greenlees

Chairman, TBWA

I'd like to single out two people in particular. First is Michael Baulk who is chief executive with AMV. I admire him particularly for the manner in which he was able to step into a situation where he was successor to the hugely successful legacy of David Abbott and to achieve it with enormous success. It's never easy to be a successor and he managed it. His business acumen is also a reason to single him out. He has balanced the seemingly conflicting ingredients in advertising - management and creativity and he has married these two criteria to great effect. I also have to mention Martin Boase of BMP. He has achieved 30 years of excellence with seemingly effortless ease. He has built a culture which has stood the test of time and he's done this thanks to his clear vision and lightness of touch. He managed to create a working environment in which there is a single-minded clarity regarding the agencies' intentions. It is thanks to him that BMP is one of the most successful agencies, and Agency of the Year.

Amanda Walsh,

Managing Director,

Walsh, Trott, Chick, Smith

John Webster would be my choice. At the moment he's at BNP where he used to be Creative Director. He has created some of the greatest advertising campaigns I have ever seen. He's BNP's secret weapon - innovative, original



Maurice Saatchi: Regarded by his peers as their most formidable business rival

Steve Morgan

and brilliant. Creatives are absolutely vital to advertising agencies because you live or die by your creativity - it's what the clients can't do themselves. An advertising agency simply cannot be successful without successful campaigns and your campaigns are designed by your creatives, at the heart of the agency.

David Kershaw

Partner, M&C Saatchi

Maurice Saatchi is a seminal figure in advertising. He utterly changed the landscape of the advertising business. Actually I'd say both Maurice and Charles. They were the first to create a really big agency which was creatively outstanding. Before the Saatchis arrived on the landscape we had either British boutique agencies or huge and boring multinational companies. The Saatchis enabled the advertising agency to take the best of both worlds: they combined the independence and flexibility

of the small company with the size of the multinational. Their move allowed lots of very good big agencies to flourish. The Saatchis really did break the mould; thanks to their entrepreneurialism they were able to smash the orthodox pattern of the old-style agency which was too restrictive for this business. They see nothing wrong in being aggressively creative and complement each other perfectly.

Andy Law

Chairman, St Lukes

I'm not sure if my choice of adman is really legitimate, as I don't think he's still alive. But the most interesting person I've seen in advertising has been Bill Bernbach who was working in the Fifties in America. I choose him because he turned his back on the conventions of the advertising industry. He took the decision to put the art directors and the copywriters together to create the first ever creative team, a

system is still operational. It offered us a whole new organisational model which was truly inspiring. It would be more difficult for me to name someone who is around these days, as advertising has become far too conventional. Everyone lives in their cosy advertising world; there are fewer and fewer independent agencies around as they are all being bought by the global conglomerates in the pursuit of shareholder value. And there are no more creative risk takers. However, if you were to force my hand, I'd have to say Martin Sorrell who is the chairman of WPP. He has a steady hand on a large corporate tiller.

Martin Sorrell

Chairman, WPP

David Ogilvy impresses me most out of those in the advertising business at the moment. He is exceptional because he started out in advertising at the age of 40 which is difficult enough to do but he went over

and was a tremendous success in the US market. There are very few people in our business who have broken into and made a success of themselves in that particular market. I think the main reason he was able to do this was thanks to his vision. One of the first really important things he spotted was the Internet's potential. He also has personality, which is vital - he's not just a man in a suit and he's not just a "suit" he has bridged the gap between the creative and the suit. He is successful, forceful, interesting and determined.

Maurice Saatchi

Partner, M&C Saatchi.

The people I admire most in the industry are my joint chief executives Moray MacLennan and Nick Hurrell. As far as I'm concerned they are the best I know in the advertising industry; they know the most about advertising.

INTERVIEWS BY

SALLY CHATTERTON

Wisdom of old can be bad for your wealth

In general, declared Voltaire more than 200 years ago "the art of government consists in taking as much money as possible from one party of the citizens to give to another". Anyone who doubts the wisdom of this statement needs look no further than the business of the National Debt.

For decades after decades, successive governments have borrowed money from their citizens in order to plough the proceeds into more or less dubious ventures, from war to make-work, buy-vote schemes of little enduring value.

The long-term figures tell a grim and mostly unremittent story. If you had lent £100 to the Government in 1918, by buying what still goes under the gloriously euphemistic name of gilt-edged stock, your capital would today have a purchasing power of precisely £3.66.

Had you put the same amount of money into the stock market in 1918, your capital would today be worth £100.60 in real (inflation-adjusted) terms. In other words, while

committing your savings to the private sector would have grown the value of your money 10 times in real terms over the last 80 years, those who lent their savings to the Government instead have seen 96 per cent of their capital wiped out.

No wonder that Dr Johnson opted that patriotism was the last refuge of the scoundrel.

Inflation of course is the big stick that wipes out value in the gilt-edged market. Because the coupons (interest payments) on government stock are fixed in advance, any change for the worse in the value of money works to the advantage of the issuer by eroding the value of the amount he owes.

It took nearly 30 years of disastrous postwar inflationary experience for the last generation to learn quite how stupid it was to lend money to an institution (government) which has at the same time abrogated to itself the power to devalue the currency in which it has borrowed.

It is no surprise that those who suffered the indignity of seeing

their savings wiped out in real terms should largely have sworn never to lend to the Government again. Yet the trouble, as so often in matters financial, is that those who live in the past are condemned to repeat the mistakes of their predecessors.

Any investor who today turns his back on government stock, or other fixed-interest securities, is risking just as much by not investing in that medium as his or her parents did when they opted to entrust their savings to the capricious care of the state all those years ago.

The latest annual historical survey of equity and gilt returns by Barclays Capital, just released, underlines quite how dramatically the equation has changed in the last decade. For headline writers, the big feature of the 1990s in investment terms has been the continued dramatic strength of the world's stock markets.

Last year was the eighth time in 10 years that shares have produced double digit returns - a

record of sustained bullishness that is unmatched by any previous decade in the last 200 years.

Yet the market performance which in truth deserves most attention in the 1990s is not the gravity-defying behaviour of the stock market - which is clearly operating at an unsustainable level of overvaluation - but that of the bond markets.

One hundred pounds invested in gilts in 1990, according to Credit Suisse First Boston, would today be worth £243 in real terms; the same amount invested in equities would be worth £275.

Allowing for transaction costs and taxes (both effectively higher on shares than gilts), there is no doubt that gilts have been at least as good an investment as shares - and this, remember, in an equity bull market of epic proportions. The message becomes even clearer when you look at the risk side of the equation.

For some years now, every time a computer has been asked to crunch the numbers and produce

an optimal portfolio, measuring returns on different classes of asset against their perceived risk, it has come up with the conclusion that most investors should have a 100 per cent weighting in shares.

However, all these optimisation exercises make the classic boffin's error of inputting historical rather than forward-looking data for returns and asset volatility.

If you look forward rather than back, and adjust for risk in a world where inflation and interest rates continue to fall, it does not require a first class degree to realise which class of investment has actually been riskier.

In fact, the latest optimisation exercise carried out by Barclays Capital gives a prominent place to gilts.

For all but the highest risk takers, it suggests, even an investor blessed with 100 per cent foresight should have put at least 40 per cent of his portfolio into gilts and/or cash rather than betting everything he had on the overvalued equity mar-

ket. Among the most impressive performances of the gilts market last year was the strong showing of War Loan.

The price of War Loan rose in 1998 and now trades at 76p in the pound, an event which it is safe to say few experts ever thought they would live to see. Now War Loan is one of the best performing investment classes of the year (perhaps, if yields continue to fall, even in danger of being redeemed, which would be something).

Nevertheless, its dramatic price recovery is a pointed reminder that those who want to maximise their investment returns must always ignore yesterday's conventional wisdom in favour of an open mind about what might happen next.

At the risk of generalising, nothing is usually more injurious to your wealth than to listen to the wise words of previous generations, their assumption being that the future would be altogether like the past, which of course it never is - as even Voltaire knew.



JO DAVIS

It took nearly 30 years of disastrous post-war inflationary experience for the last generation to learn quite how stupid it was to lend money to the Government

Should you invest in... telecoms?

By KIERAN ROOT

IS THERE still growth in the telecoms sector? Many professional investors think so. "Telecoms was a sector that performed exceptionally well in 1998, as investors perceived the growth potential of an industry subject to liberalisation," said David Harbage, a sector analyst with Barclays Stockbrokers. The three best performers in the FTSE in 1998 were telecoms companies - Colt Telecom, Orange and Telewest.

Ian Lance, of Gartmore's UK investment team, said: "We are keen on the sector in the UK and Europe for three reasons - firstly, because there are phenomenal rates of growth in data transmission; secondly, the growth potential of mobile phones and, finally, the move to global consolidation, as shown by the announcements concerning BT and AT&T and Vodafone and Airtouch."

The fund management house Johnson Fry recently launched a unit trust specialising in global telecoms companies. Richard Neill, a trust manager, said: "There is pricing pressure, but growth should be sufficient to allow for this."

Growth is the name of the game, and two names recur, the giants BT and Vodafone. Anthea Gaukroger, a

telecoms analyst at the stock broker Greig Middleton, said: "BT has just had very good third-quarter results. This was due partly to the increased use of the Internet."

"The Internet now accounts for 15 per cent of all call minutes and BT thinks that could rise to 25 per cent next year. This is what sent BT's share price soaring last week."

Mr Lance agrees. "BT will benefit from the growth of data traffic and mobile phones. Big global companies want telecom firms to carry calls around the world on their own networks. That is the reason why the BT/AT&T link-up is so attractive."

Mr Harbage said: "BT is reasonably valued. It has a good income stream and it pays a dividend that will grow in future."

BT also has 60 per cent of Cellnet, with Securicor holding the rest. "The DIT have said that BT can buy all of it - a bid is inevitable," Mr Harbage said. Ms Gaukroger is cautious. "BT were back-peddalling on that last week. BT's share price has been exceptionally strong and you have to ask whether all this good news really justifies trading on 30 times earnings for the year to March

1999. We rate BT as an attractive stock rather than an outright buy." She is bullish about Vodafone. "The Vodafone/Airtouch deal is a good one as Vodafone previously had no exposure to US," she said.

"And there is a good fit in Europe. The deal enables Vodafone to increase roaming revenues - UK subscribers roaming into Europe and Continental European users roaming into the UK."

Mr Harbage said: "Vodafone/Airtouch is now a major global player. Its shares will be well supported by index fund managers tracking the FTSE, because they will have to double their stakes."

A similar process could affect the network provider, Energis. "With Energis now being given a free float it will almost certainly enter the FTSE in March," Mr Harbage said.

There are good reasons for looking positively on the new breed of telecoms companies that provide state-of-the-art call networks.

Mr Lance said: "We advise our fund managers to be under-invested in the big former state-owned networks, with a bias towards smaller, new entrants."

"Newcomers are either building their own networks, or where they are using established networks, the regulators have ensured that usage costs are low. On this basis, our funds have invested in the likes of Colt Telecom, Energis and GTS."

Mr Neill, of Johnson Fry, said: "We are selectively looking at the new breed of carriers, such as GTS."

"They have constructed a pan-European network of fibre optics. Over five years, they reckon their network could carry 20 times the current value of all European networks."

Of the "big three" established UK telecoms companies, Cable & Wireless is the potential laggard.

Mr Harbage said: "In five years it will be a very different company. It's already hived off or floated a lot of its businesses and it would be very attractive to a large US provider which wanted to expand operations in the Far East."

Is the world not really Orange? "Orange is a pure UK operator and it doesn't make money, although it will do in 18 months," Mr Harbage said. "It has good technology but it's a pure play on the UK mobile telephone sector and not the most attractive share because of this."



BT: A hot topic of conversation as calls soar

SHAREWATCH

BARCLAYS BANK shares are worth £18, according to Warburg Dillon Read, and Dresdner Kleinwort Benson also recommend the stock following the results which turned out better than expected yesterday. But some analysts remain concerned about how the bank will tackle the continuing need to reduce operating costs. NatWest Bank is favoured by HSBC Securities and SG Securities, hoping for good figures and possible bid developments.

ROOTS SHARES are tipped by the broker WestLB Panmure, which sees them reaching £10 in the near future on the back of improving profits and resistance to a possible recession. Renkoll, the fast-growing cleaning services giant, is tipped by Schroders.

HADEN MACLELLAN, the process engineer, is tipped by Albert E Sharp, who now rates the shares a "buy" at current prices after this week's profit warning, which was blamed on accounting problems in the paint division.

ORANGE, THE high-flying telecom company, is now a "sell" according to brokers CSFB, concerned that the shares have been over-typed in the recent rush for telecoms stocks. The shares have come off the top but have still tripled from their low point in the past year.

NO PAIN, NO GAIN: OUR MAN'S PORTFOLIO

Shares with appeal for private investors

A GREAT deal of rubbish is written about investing in the stock market. There is a tendency in some quarters to present share dealing as an acute science understood only by the chosen few. Yet buying and selling shares is a relatively simple exercise which is attracting a growing army of small-time followers.

Many of the early-retired have developed share trading into a lucrative hobby, swelling the ranks of the private investor. The growth of execution-only stockbrokers as well as the continuing wellbeing of many of the smaller, established stockbroking firms is due to the increasing army of small shareholders. Over the weeks ahead, I will be attempting to assemble a portfolio of shares with particular appeal to the private investor.

There are two prime types of private investor - those who are prepared to enjoy the thrills and spills of a straightforward punt and those keen to establish a wide-ranging portfolio which they hope will stand them in good stead, perhaps emerging as a second-line pension.

The much maligned punter, an essential factor in any market, is akin to a gambler, moving in and out of situations, hopefully grabbing a profit in the process. The longer-term shareholder decides to do his own thing because he fails to see the logic in paying a fund manager to do the job for him. Many fund managers do not inspire confidence and one can only express bewilderment at some of their actions.

There is also the problem

that many investments groups are now so big they can hardly avoid getting caught up in investments they later regret.

Their tendency to stick to the 100 Footsie constituents is understandable, but it seems that, after ignoring the undoubted value on the market's undercard for years, a few have recently ventured forth among the tiddlers.

Anyone building a portfolio should have three categories of investment - blue chips, mid caps, small caps and adventure shares. As the portfolio progresses there will invariably be a fourth category - shares which should have been sold.

Blue chips should stand the test of time. Despite various setbacks - some now see the 1987 crash as a mere blip - they have enjoyed a relentless advance over the past 20 years.

Even a perennial under-performer like Allied Domecq has shown some return. It has moved ahead, going from 80p in 1978 to around 450p. Last year it touched 634p. There were, of course, many better invest-

ments but, excluding inflation, there is still a profit and the drinks group has paid increasing dividends over the years.

I think any portfolio should have a handful of blue chips which are more or less regarded as fixtures. Anyone starting a build-up should think about a modest interest in the high-flying drug and telecom sectors, but might feel that in 10 years' time Imperial Chemical Industries and Marks & Spencer will look in better shape than they do now.

All the historic evidence sug-

gests they will, although both may yet have to hit their low points. An electronics group, like GEC, and a utility like Thames Water should also feature. Entries from the mid and small cap categories should be given a rather less permanent status. They should be looked at as long-term holds but there must be a willingness to chop and change, taking a profit or accepting a loss.

Adventure stocks often lurk deep on the under-card - bright hopefuls, recovery situations or spots which the rest of the investment community may have missed.

The fourth category should not exist but I bet it will. Too many small investors are slow to sell. They fall in love with shares and eventually it becomes too late for them to make any realistic sell decision.

An example is Ronson. Floated as a brewery at 60p, it got to around 80p and now bumps along at less than a penny. No shareholder from the days when the shares were above 50p should still be in the

luxury goods group which Victor Kiam is attempting to turn round. Yet quite a few still are.

Each week in this column I hope to put forward investment suggestions which will appeal to - and more importantly make money for - the small investor. Any investor knows that money will be lost whether he takes the long-term view or loves a punt. The portfolio trick is to let profits run and cut losses.

This is easier said than done but careful selection and more importantly a broad mix of investments should ensure a profitable outcome.

After all, investment or unit trusts are merely a version of pick-and-mix. By using an execution-only broker, a small investor, with around £30,000, should be able to build a balanced portfolio and a good return can be achieved with quite a lot less than that.

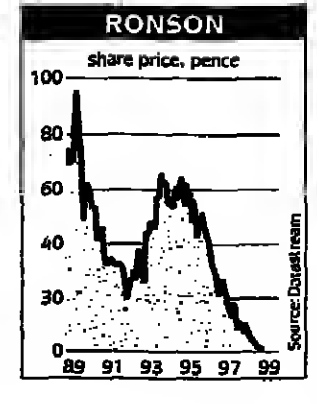
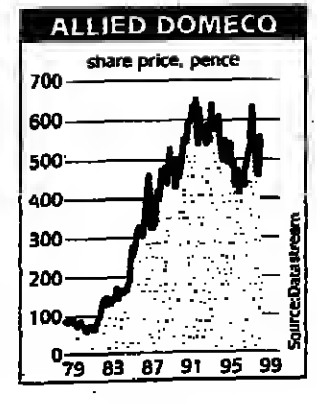
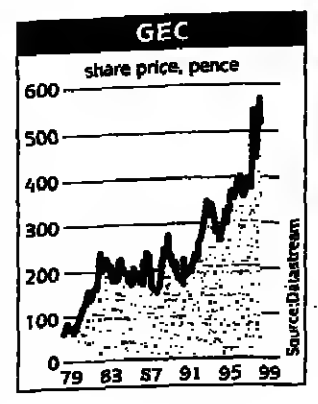
But beginners beware. The stock market takes no prisoners. Market professionals think they know it all and love to take inexperienced shareholders for a ride. The old fashioned "ramp" is alive and well and lurking to entrap the unwary.

I have been covering City affairs since 1958 and I hope to avoid such pitfalls by creating a wide-ranging portfolio. Building a portfolio is a long-term game and, as they say in the advertisements, shares can go up as well as down.

But, as I have indicated, the long-term market move has been upwards and I see no reason, allowing for the inevitable occasional hiccup, why it should not continue.



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Equities remain long-term gamble

THE OLD SAW that the value of a share can rise as well as fall has never been as apparent as in the past few months.

Share prices have fallen and risen wildly, often in the space of a week, leaving many investors, large or small, unsure as to whether now is the right time to plough more of their hard-earned cash into the stock market.

Of course, we can all agree that over a long period of time it makes sense to invest in equities. But for many, there is still that fear of a looming stock market crash to hold us back.

After all, what happens if you invest on a Monday and by Friday the value of your holding has gone down by 10 per cent?

To take that argument further, if the markets really are so volatile at the moment, wouldn't it make sense to hold off for a few months more rather than pump money into equities immediately?

There are a number of issues to look at here. First, it is important to understand what kind of risk you are running when investing in equities.

There is "specific" risk involved in taking a risk with an individual company. Clearly, if you pick the wrong one to buy shares in and it turns out to be badly run, or the sector it operates in is going through a lean spell, then the company's share price may fall.

This is why it almost always makes sense to invest in a portfolio of shares, so that any risk may be spread out.

Alternatively, pooled funds, such as unit trusts or investment trusts, achieve the same effect, placing your money with that of many thousands of other investors.

The money buys shares in hundreds of companies, so that if one or two go belly-up, the fund itself won't

BY NIC CICUTTI
Personal Finance Editor

be too badly hit. There is also "market" risk to bear in mind. This is where no matter how many otherwise sound companies you invest in, you will be clobbered by a "bear market".

This is where there are more buyers than sellers of equities: the options here are usually either to hang in there and wait for the market to recover, or sell at a loss.

There is a third option too: that of seeing that a fall also offers a buying opportunity. The lower prices are, the higher they will rise when a recovery occurs.

Of course, a canny investor might prefer to wait until the moment when the market has fallen to its lowest point before entering the market. Does this make sense?

In theory it does. The problem lies in picking the exact moment to invest. Fidelity, the large US fund management group, carried out research on the period between the end of December 1986 and the end of December 1997, an 11-year period.

Fidelity's research over the period shows that the FTSE All Share index delivered annualised returns of 14.8 per cent.

But if you had missed out the 10 best days' growth over those 11 years, the annualised growth would have been 10.7 per cent.

Missing out on the best 40 days over the same 11 years would have delivered returns of just 5.2 per cent.

In other words, investment performance, while positive over the period, rose in a series of spurts. Missing out on an average of less than four days' growth a year would have cut the average annual performance to almost one third.

A canny investor might agree with this but still hopes to get the in-



For many the fear of a looming stock market crash is enough to hold back from investing in shares. But, as in climbing a mountain, it is important to understand the risks when investing in equities

Steve Peakman

vestment period right. Again, Fidelity's researchers looked at the performance of the MSCI index (another way of measuring share prices) between the end of 1969 and 31 December 1997.

The study was based on three hypothetical investments made on the same day each year - at the highest point in the market (suggesting a poor investment strategy), at the low point (a "good" strategy) and at the arbitrary investment date of 1 January each year (how most of us are likely to invest).

At the end of this 27-year investment period, researchers calculated the annualised returns on each investment date.

Here are the returns: high point, 15.12 per cent; low point, 17.12 per cent; 1 January, 15.38 per cent.

While there is a difference in returns, it is not as significant as one might assume - and it is based on getting the investment timing exactly right every year, an unlikely scenario. There is, however, one way of minimising potential losses and enhancing gains.

Making regular investments offers the potential for "pound cost averaging". This means that if you buy into equities as their price is falling, you will receive more of them. In turn, gains that individual funds make will become magnified.

Here, despite the fact that share prices rose by 15 per cent in 12 months, the increase in the value of the fund was more than 25 per cent.

The message to take home is that, for most of us, average investors, there is rarely a "right" time to invest. What we can hope for, how-

ever, is that over a long period of time any sharp downward corrections can even themselves out.

And if prices are falling, then it makes very good sense to buy into a downturn.

The Independent has published a Guide to PEPs, which examines in detail the arguments about investing for growth or income.

For your free copy of copy of the guide, sponsored by Scottish Widows Fund Management, call 0345 678910.

Ethics are now easier to stand by

BY IAIN MORSE

NOT SO long ago, retail banking was a local or, at best, national business. Banks like the Ulster, Clydesdale and Yorkshire were independent, with boards of governors drawn from among the local great and good.

Now the Ulster is owned by NatWest and both Clydesdale and Yorkshire by an Australian banking group. "The whole banking system, and increasingly that for other financial goods and services, has been globalised," said Glen Saunders, the managing director of Triodos Bank. "Most local banks are part of huge, international groups."

Information technology has accelerated this change, giving "convenience" banking with facilities ranging from cash machines to Internet transactions. But it also results in huge volumes of money circulating in the world's financial markets. This money passes neither for rest or sleep, nor does it judge right from wrong. Taking part in this system seems unavoidable, but raises difficult questions of conscience for the ethically minded. "In reality, no major bank would pass even a weak test on ethical and ecological grounds," Mr Saunders said. "They all stand morally, though not legally, condemned."

The Co-operative Bank is one institution that tries to buck this trend. As many as 40 per cent of its new account holders choose its services on ethical grounds and since 1992, the bank has consulted its customers on which ethical policies they would like followed.

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BEST SAVINGS RATES

INSTANT ACCESS BRANCH ACCOUNTS									
TELEPHONE	ACCOUNT	MINIMUM	INTEREST	PAID	TERMS	FEES	OTHER	NOTES	
0845 7104010	Telex Savings	Instant	£1	4.50%	4.50%	Yy			
0800 222200	Card Saver	Instant	£50	5.25%	5.25%	Yy			
01202 843650	Instant Saver	Instant	£500	4.85%	4.85%	12Yy			
01422 333333	Instant Saver	Instant	£500	5.25%	5.25%	Yy			
POSTAL/TELEPHONE ACCOUNTS - NO NOTICE									
0845 8000282	Savings	Post/Phone	£1	6.50%	6.50%	Yy			
0345 555557	Direct Access	Telephone	£1	5.85%	5.85%	Yy			
0800 995995	Direct Savings	Post/Phone	£1,000	6.20%	6.20%	Yy			
0500 111 200	Direct Access	Post/Phone	£2,500	6.15%	6.15%	Yy			
NOTICE ACCOUNTS AND BONDS									
0800 272505	Post-Inst 30	30 Day (P)	£5,000	6.25%	6.25%	Yy			
01723 500616	40 Day Access	40 Day	£1,000	6.65%	6.65%	Yy			
0345 555557	50 Day Notice	50 Day (T)	£1	5.95%	5.95%	Yy			
0500 111 200	90 Direct	90 Day (B)	£10,000	6.65%	6.65%	Yy			
CHEQUE ACCOUNTS									
01436 744505	NICA	None	£1,000	4.75%	4.75%	Yy			
0181 4472040	NICA	Instant	£5,000	5.75%	5.75%	Yy			
0800 0728738	Alphac Cheque	Instant	£5,000	5.75%	5.75%	Yy			
0800 429429	Classic Postal	Instant	£10,000	4.25%	4.25%	Yy			
FIXED RATE BONDS									
0171 8678150	Fixed Rate Bond	6 Month	£5,000	5.75%	5.83%	OM			
0171 8678150	Fixed Rate Bond	1 Year	£5,000	5.80%	5.80%	OM			
0845 6018572	Fixed Rate Bond	2 Year	£1,000	6.00%	6.00%	Yy			
0800 774499	Fixed Rate Bond	5 Year	£5,000	5.75%	5.75%	Yy			
FIRST TESSAS									
0345 171777	5 Year	£3,000	7.40%	7.40%	Yy				
0500 111200	5 Year	£3,000	7.10%	7.10%	Yy				
0800 300555	5 Year	£3,000	7.10%	7.10%	Yy				
0800 225221	5 Year	£3,000	6.95%	6.95%	Yy				
FOLLOW ON TESSAS									
0800 300555	5 Year	£3,000	7.10%	7.10%	Yy				
0500 111200	5 Year	£3,000	7.10%	7.10%	Yy				
0171 2321650	5 Year	£3,000	7.10%	7.10%	Yy				
0800 400100	5 Year	£3,000	7.00%	7.00%	Yy				
OFFSHORE ACCOUNTS (GROSS)									
01481 822747	Instant 6	None	£5,000	6.30%	6.30%	Yy			
01481 822747	Instant 6	None	£25,000	6.50%	6.50%	Yy			
01481 714600	Offshore 60 Day	60 Day	£25,000	6.50%	6.50%	Yy			
01624 663556	Notice 180	180 Day	£10,000	7.10%	7.10%	Yy			
GUARANTEED INCOME BONDS (ASSURED)									
0181 380388	1 Year	£20,000	4.15%	4.15%	Yy				
0800 838020	2 Year	£10,000	3.95%	3.95%	Yy				
0800 838020	3 Year	£10,000	3.90%	3.90%	Yy				
0181 207907	4 Year	£10,000	4.00%	4.00%	Yy				
0800 838020	5 Year	£10,000	4.05%	4.05%	Yy				
NATIONAL SAVINGS ACCOUNTS (GROSS)									
1 Month	£20	3.95%	Yy						
3 Month	£500	4.10%	Yy						
6 Month	£2,500	4.20%	Yy						
1 Year	£5,000	4.30%	Yy						
2 Year	£10,000	4.50%	Yy						
3 Year	£25,000	4.75%	Yy						
4 Year	£50,000	5.25%	Yy						
5 Year	£100,000	5.50%	Yy						
INCOME BONDS w.e.f 3/2/1999									
3 Month	£2,000	5.25%	Yy						
6 Month	£2,000	5.50%	Yy						
1 Year	£1,000	4.25%	OM						
2 Year	£1,000	4.75%	Yy						
3 Year	£2,000	5.00%	Yy						
4 Year	£500	4.25%	My						
5 Year	£100	3.25%	OM						
10 Year	£100	1.85% + inflation	OM						
CAPITAL BONDS Series 0									
5 Year	£100	4.25%	OM						
FIRST OPTION BONDS									
12 Month	£1,000	4.75%	Yy						
2 Year	£2,000	5.00%	Yy						
PERSONAL GUARANTEED INCOME BOND Series 6									
5 Year	£500	4.25%	My						
40th ISSUE (tax free)									
5 Year	£100	3.25%	OM						
15TH INDEX-LINKED (tax free)									
5 Year	£100	1.85% + inflation	OM						
CHILDREN'S BOND Issue 16 (tax free)									
5 Year	£25	4.25%	OM						

AEI=Annual Equivalent Rate. B=Operated by post and telephone. F=Fixed rate call other rates are variable. N=Net rate. OM=Interest paid on maturity. P=Operated by post. T=Operated by telephone. All rates subject to change without notice. Please check all rates and terms before investing. All rates except Guaranteed Income Bonds are shown gross. Figures compiled on 16th February 1999 Source: MoneyFacts

'Small caps' beat Footsie

By Nic Cicutti

A NOTICEABLE feature of the past few weeks has been the sparkling performance shown by "small-cap" stocks in the FTSE 250 share index, decisively beating the Footsie index of 100 leading companies - at least until banking stocks showed signs of revival this week.

According to Perpetual's UK fund managers, Stephen Whittaker and Neil Woodford, there are three main factors driving this mid-cap performance, after almost 12 months in the doldrums.

There has been an increase in mergers and acquisition activity in the sector, which is driving up values. This bears out the view that even when the investment community has not found mid-caps attractive, the corporate sector has been buying companies.

The second reason is that interest rates remain low, a factor which is particularly helpful for smaller companies. Rates may have to fall further, partly because the economy can sustain lower rates and partly because Euro-convergence seems to be gathering pace. European interest rates are three per cent at present.

The third factor which has been driving up mid-cap stocks is a growing consensus that the recession will not be as severe as was feared. This is in contrast to earlier expectations of a marked slowdown in the economy.

Predictions of a recovery in small to mid-cap stocks, in which many fund managers invested, came to nothing. In fact, mid-caps have been comprehensively outperformed by Footsie giants for several years. Is this about to change?

Perpetual believes it may. Ian Brady, who heads the company's US desk, is also predicting a broadening of the market there, with less domination of large-cap stocks, particularly in the technology sector. He predicts a difficult six months, followed by an end to big cap "momentum" investment.

"If the small and mid-caps can't do it now, they never can," he says.

CORPORATE BONDS

COMPANY	YIELD	TERM	PRICE	LAST	YIELD
Paragon	8.50	N/A	3.15	1.25	
Abeyon	8.48	N/A	4.25	1.25	
Franklin	8.00	N/A	5.00	1.00	
M&G	7.61	N/A	1.25		
Schwartz	7.00	N/A	3.25	1.00	
Jupiter	6.80	N/A	5.00	1.00	
Legal & Real	6.25	N/A	0.50		
Sainsbury	6.14	N/A	0.75		
Fidelity	6.11	N/A	0.70		
Virgin Direct	5.87	N/A	0.70		
M&M	5.83	N/A	2.25	1.00	
Guinness	4.97	N/A	0.65		

COMPULSORY ANNUITY RATES

£10,000: Level Annuity, guaranteed five years, monthly in advance	AGE	SEX	ANNUITY
Male (Legal & General)	50	£5	£1,012
Female (Swire Assurance)	50	£5	£851
Male (M&G)	50	£5	£850
Joint Life (Norwich Union)	50	£5	£707
Escalating 5% p.a. no guarantee, monthly in advance	AGE	SEX	ANNUITY
Male (Legal & General)	50	£5	£731
Female (Swire Assurance)	50	£5	£580
Male (M&G)	50	£5	£580
Joint Life (Norwich Union)	50	£5	£410

Source: Annuity Direct

BEST BORROWERS RATES

MORTGAGES									
FIXED RATES - WITHOUT REDEMPTION TIE-IN									
TELEPHONE	RATE	PERIOD	MAX LTV	FEES	INCENTIVE	REDEMPTION PENALTY			
Britannia BS	0300 525350	4.99%	2 years	95%	£295	Free if less than 1 year & 10% of balance	1st 3 yrs	10% of balance	
Newcastle BS	0191 2442468	5.19%	31.3.02	90%	£245	Advances up to 95% - no high lending fee (LHP)	1st 3 yrs	10% of balance	
West Bromwich BS	0121 5305404	5.25%	30.4.04	85%	£295	Free ASU for 1 year	1st 3 yrs	10% of balance	
FIXED RATES - WITH REDEMPTION TIE-IN									
Northern Rock	0845 6050500	3.49%	01.4.01	95%	£295	Free ASU for 6 months & 10% of balance	1st 3 yrs	10% of balance	
FirstMortgage	0800 050088	3.99%	31.3.02	90%	£295	Free ASU for 1 year	1st 3 yrs	10% of balance	
Herwich & Pears	01733 632626	4.99%	4 years	85%	£295	Free ASU for 1 year	1st 3 yrs	10% of balance	
CAPPED RATES									
Bristol & West	0800 119355	4.85%	01.4.01	95%	£295	Advances up to 95% - no LHP	1st 3 yrs	10% of balance	
Hesley Eton BS	01782 255150	4.95%	31.1.02	95%	£295	Free ASU for 1 year	1st 3 yrs	10% of balance	
Scarborough BS	0950 133149	5.65%	4 years	95%	£295	Free ASU for 1 year	1st 3 yrs	10% of balance	
FIRST-TIME BUYERS (VARIABLE UNLESS SHOWN)									
Coventry BS	0345 625522	3.55%R	31.3.01	95%	£295	Adv. up to 95% - no LHP	1st 3 yrs	10% of balance	
Scarborough BS	0950 133149	4.20%	3 years	95%	-	£200 cash rebate	1st 3 yrs	10% of balance	
Derbyshire BS	01332 207566	5.40%R	5 years	95%	£125	£200 rebate, fee included £ up to 95% - no LHP	1st 3 yrs	10% of balance	
VARIABLE DISCOUNTED RATES									
Northern Rock	0845 6050500	3.30%	01.04.01	95%	-	Rebate 10% monthly for 1st 3 yrs up to 95% - no LHP	1st 3 yrs	10% of balance	
West Bromwich BS	0121 5305404	4.45%R	3 years	85%	£295	£250 rebate, free MIP & fee ASU for 1 year	1st 3 yrs	10% of balance	
Halifax	0500 253039	4.95%	30.4.04	90%	-	Free valuation & legal fees	1st 3 yrs	10% of balance	
UNSECURED PERSONAL LOANS									
APR	FIXED MONTHLY PAYMENT ON £5,000 FOR 3 YEARS								
Northern Rock	0345 421421	9.5%N	With insurance	182.37	No insurance	£165.41			
Phase A Loan (Northern Rock)	0800 138698	11.9%	With insurance	183.40	No insurance	£164.61			
Direct Line	0181 680966	12.2%N	With insurance	182.34	No insurance	£165.22			
OVERDRAFTS									
ACCOUNT	CURRENT	APR	QUANTITY	APR	QUANTITY	APR	QUANTITY	APR	QUANTITY
Alliance & Leicester	0500 959595	12.00%	2.00%	2.00%	2.00%	2.00%	2.00%	2.00%	2.00%
Halifax	0500 302010	12.00%	2.10%	2.10%	2.10%	2.10%	2.10%	2.10%	2.10%
Abbey National	0800 731774	13.00%	2.28%	2.28%	2.28%	2.28%	2.28%	2.28%	2.28%
CARDS STANDARD									
TELEPHONE	CARD TYPE	APR	APR	APR	APR	APR	APR	APR	APR
Co-operative Bank	0800 128000	Advantage Visa	0.48%N	5.90%N	NI	0 days	£20K		
People's Bank Coventry	0500 551055	Mastercard/Visa	0.56%N	6.90%N	NI	56 days	£20K		
RBS Advanta	0800 077770	Visa	0.56%N	6.90%N	NI	56 days	£20K		
GOLD CARDS									
Co-operative Bank	0800 404070	Base Rate Visa	0.4563%	10.04%	£120	46 days	£20K		
Co-operative Bank	0800 128000	Adv Gold Visa	0.48%N	5.90%N	NI	0 days	£20K		
People's Bank Coventry	0500 551055	Mastercard/Visa	0.56%N	6.90%N	NI	56 days	£20K		
STORE CARDS									
TELEPHONE	CARD TYPE	APR	APR	APR	APR	APR	APR	APR	APR
John Lewis	Visa Store	1.39%	18.0%	1.39%	18.0%				
Marks & Spencer	01244 681881	1.53%	25.7%	1.99%	26.7%				
BHS	Visa Store	1.95%	26.0%	2.15%	29.0%				
ASU = Accidents, sickness and unemployment insurance. B+C = Buildings and contents insurance, end-of-month.									
D = Minimum age 22 years. H = If insurance on unarranged APR 12.5%. N = Introductory rate for a limited period. R = Rate ref.									
L259. U = Unemployment insurance. MIP = Mortgage indemnity premium. All rules subject to change without notice. Please check all rates before borrowing.									
Figures compiled on: 10th February 1999									
Source: MoneyFacts									

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Interested candidates should send their CV to Elinor Campbell at Michael Page Finance, Page House, 39-41, Parker Street, London WC2B 5LN, fax 0171 631 6662 or e-mail: elinorcampbell@michaelpage.com

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CVs to P.O. Box 21015B, Islington, London N1 2XQ

INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL INSTITUTION seeks an experienced corporate financier. The successful candidate will be responsible for origination, negotiating, completion and management of a wide range of investment projects in Sub-Saharan Africa. A Masters Degree is essential together with accounting and business qualifications, coupled with in-depth experience of business and financial development in transitional sub-Saharan economies outside South Africa. High level contacts within national and international companies, governments and parastatal enterprises would be advantageous. Salary negotiable.
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- Continual relationship building and reporting to clients with specific information on a quarterly basis.
- Supervision of internal accounting processes and supervision of a junior accountant.
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Individuals must be qualified Accountants, preferably with experience of small business accounts, audit procedures and a 'can do' attitude. An ability to liaise at all levels and extensive experience dealing with clients on a day-to-day basis is essential.

Interested candidates should forward their CV, with details of current salary package to Natasha Putrins at Michael Page Finance, Page House, 39-41, Parker Street, London WC2B 5LN or e-mail: natashaputrins@michaelpage.com

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Tel: 01462 476700 email: info@msresearchtrust.org.uk

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Rabobank International, a major division of Rabobank Nederland, one of the world's leading international banks with assets in excess of NLG300 billion and a current 'AAA' rating from all of the major rating agencies, is seeking to recruit an experienced precious metals dealer following the establishment of its PM activities in London.

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- in-depth knowledge of central banks, investors and mining houses;
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Applications, including full curriculum vitae and current remuneration details, should be sent to Lesley Ashton-Cole, Director - Human Resources, Rabobank International London Branch, Thames Court, One Queenshithe, London EC4V 3RL by not later than 12th March 1999.

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Anne Belmon, Human Resources,
AXA IM, 60 Gracechurch Street, London EC3V 0HR.
Fax: 0171 375 9495

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Further information about NESTA, full job descriptions and details of how to apply should be accessed from our website: <http://www.nesta.org.uk> or write to Ms. S. Hainsworth, NESTA, Gainsborough House, 33 Throgmorton St., London EC2N 2BR for a recruitment pack. Applications to job share are welcome. Closing date for receipt of applications: 1st March 1999. Quoting ref: IND/1.

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In Manhattan, nail maintenance is a chore

MY CABBIE for the journey from JFK airport to Manhattan had obviously been hand-picked at immigration. Some sharp-eyed official had spotted that his grasp of English was minimal: just "I love this country," and: "Whereat?" And he turned out to have no sense of direction. "Go drive a New York taxi," they had told him, and off he had gone.

To be fair, the two-hour traffic jam into the city was probably beyond my driver's control. Unfortunately, locating my hotel was beyond him, too. After driving round Manhattan for another half-an-hour, it was clear he had no idea where my hotel was. Poor thing, I

thought, that grid system can be terribly confusing can't it, what with Third Street being next to Fourth Street and so on.

Then we turned a corner and there, more by luck than anything else, was the Waldorf. Mind you, after a few days here, I don't blame anyone for not doing a local version of The Knowledge. You'd need full body armour before you'd dare venture onto the Manhattan streets on a moped with a clipboard.

Apart from the potholes, the worst hazard is the in-line skaters - crouched, demonic figures all in black with urban-warrior face-masks and serious "attitude". What this means, in effect, is that they will

mow you down as soon as look at you through their wrap-around mirrored glasses, and I've laddered two pairs of expensive tights already from much-too-close encounters.

But actually, it's not just the skaters who have gone short on the manners front. New York's the sort of place that makes everyone so impatient and rude - and it's catching. After just a few days here, I find myself drumming my fingers on the nearest surface and muttering "C'mon, c'mon," whenever I have to wait more than a nanosecond for anything.

Unfortunately for my nerves, this sort of thing happens fairly



THE TRADER

New York's the sort of place that makes everyone so impatient and rude - and it's catching

often, since rampant capitalism brings with it rampant consumer choice. Consequently, the person in front of you in the sandwich shop will be ordering "tuna on rye ciabatta, half-fat mayo, rocket, low-salt, bold the pepper, dill pickle on the side, tall skinny latte, half almond-half hazelnut, extra froth, cinnamon mocha top" when they could be having cheese and pickle on brown bread and a Nescafé.

Suddenly I'm not a bit surprised by the story of the old British duchess who is supposed to have fought off muggers with her umbrella. She'd probably just been trying to get a simple cup of tea.

Then there's all the keeping up of appearances. In London, you get your hair and nails done and think of it as a treat, and what with meeting friends for drinks, you only make it to the gym once a week. Here in New York you have your hair styled daily and regular nail maintenance sessions and think of it as a chore, and what with going to the gym every night, you have no time to make any friends.

Choice, we are told, is freedom, so how come everyone here has the look of people running on quicksand, afraid to stop moving in case they are sucked under? You'd think all this choice would make people happy. You can't help wondering, though, whether anyone would

actually choose to collect their laundry at 1am if they weren't working 14-hour days. It's not so much freedom as self-serfdom.

You'd think that all this manic activity would result in manic achievement. Not if our New York office is anything to go by. There, sitting at a spare desk in the corner, I feel as if I'm at the eye of a tornado that's whirling about me.

There must be speed in the water supply or something, I think to myself, until I step away for a screen break. As I disappear round the corner, the air behind me calms and I hear a voice say: "It's OK, she's gone. Who wants to play Grand Theft Auto?"

Accountants harden up the value of company 'soft' stuff

BY ROGER TRAPP

VALUING BUSINESSES has always been a lot more complex than it appears, even to accountants. Long before the rise of information technology led to Microsoft becoming the world's most valuable company, despite having less in the way of factories and other fixed assets than the likes of General Electric and General Motors, there was a struggle to bridge the gap between the value of those assets and the worth of the business as a whole.

Traditionally, accountants have seen the whole in terms of "soft" stuff, which they find difficult to quantify. Accordingly, when one firm bought another one that owned a collection of household-name brands, the difference between the value of the target company's factories, plant and the like and the purchase price was seen as "goodwill".

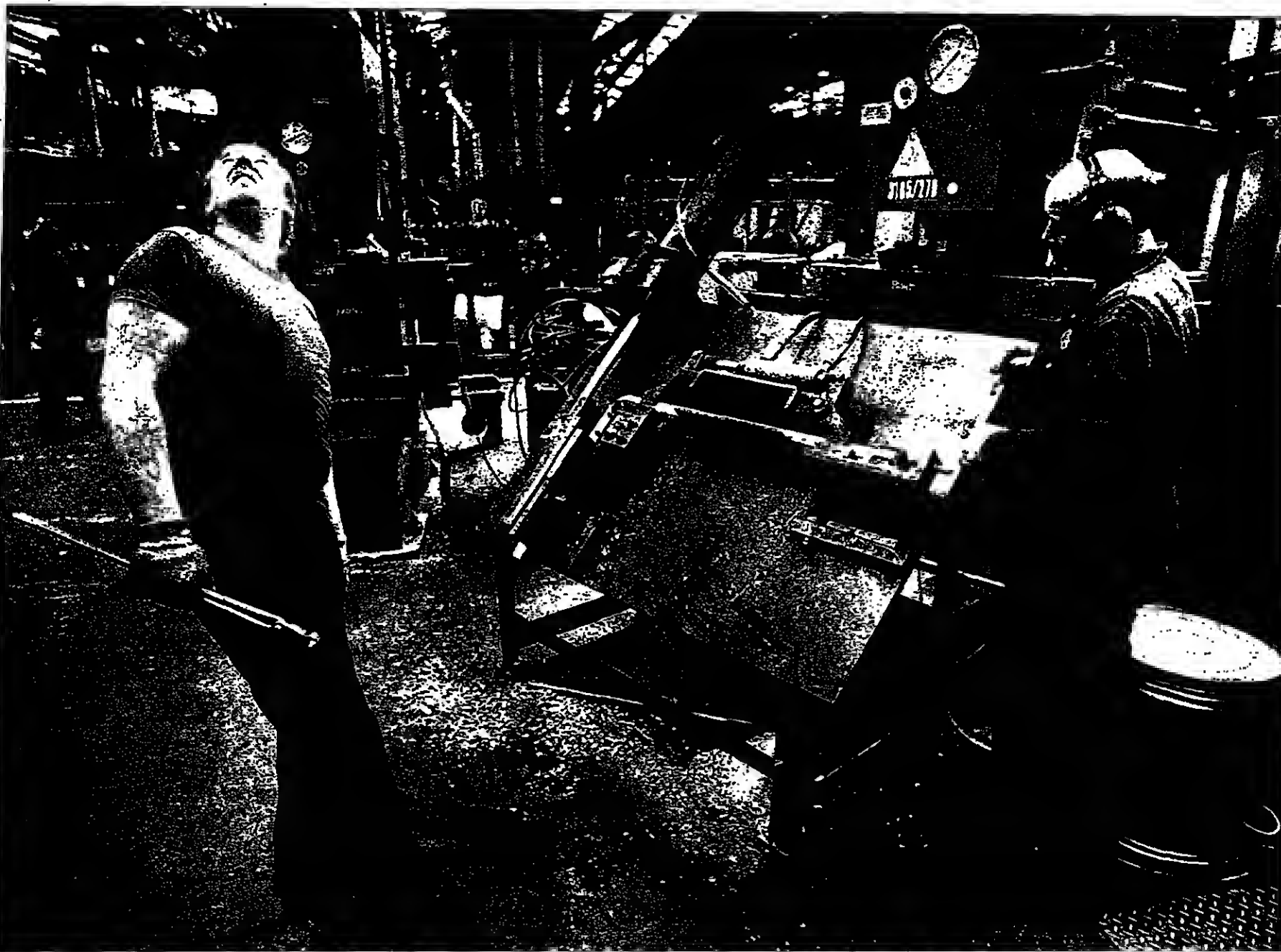
However, this caused enough problems when the soft assets were confined largely to brands. For example, it became a little odd that brands gained a value when they were acquired but not when they were home-grown. Now that received opinion has it that the true value of companies such as Microsoft lies not so much in their brands as in the people who create them, the difficulties increase.

The issue is causing much soul-searching among members of the accountancy profession. A discussion paper issued earlier this month by the Institute of Chartered Accountants' financial reporting committee notes that the pressure for financial reporting to bridge the gap between the net assets of a business and the value of a business as a whole has been growing because the gap itself is widening and adds that - under existing financial reporting conventions - the cash spent on intellectual assets and brands has an adverse effect on reported financial performance.

"The benefits this expenditure will bring are considered too difficult to foresee, control and measure to allow any assets to be recorded."

"Consequently, there is no way of telling from a company's accounts whether £1m spent on training or research expenditure has been a waste of money or money well spent," concludes the document - *Financial Performance: Alternative Views of the Bottom Line*. Absurd as this may seem, it is by no means the only issue worrying the committee.

In fact, Robert Hodgkinson, the Arthur Andersen partner who chairs it, believes that there is a danger that organisations such as the Accounting Standards Board have been concentrating on classification and presentation issues rather than on the main issue of establishing what exactly financial performance is and then exploring the implications



The worth of a firm's heavy machinery and factories is easy to work out. The value of people, ideas and 'goodwill' is harder to gauge

Mike Polnoway

for financial reporting. The paper - which is Mr Hodgkinson stresses, designed to reflect a broad range of opinion from the managers, analysts and academics who joined the accountants on the committee - concludes by saying: "Reporting the numbers is not an end in itself but is the basis for clear communication, effective accountability, efficient capital allocation and improved performance."

In seeking to satisfy such aims, Mr Hodgkinson and his colleagues have put forward "six alternative views of the financial bottom line" - ranging from cash and historical cost to businesses at current value and market capitalisation.

Bearing in mind that the purpose of accounts is to communicate financial performance, they also

look at how this can be conveyed. At one extreme is the "raw materials" approach, where investors are given various pieces of information and left to work out for themselves estimates of "underlying financial performance". At the other is the "ready-made" method where managers simply report their own estimates of how the business is performing.

The reporting committee noted weaknesses in each and goes on to propose what it calls a "two-track" approach, on the basis that nearly all users are given an overall view of what management has achieved. The benefits of this approach are:

- All users - rather than just sophisticated investors - are given an opportunity to judge whether managers are delivering what they said they would.

■ Analysts are still at liberty to perform their own calculations of a company's underlying financial performance

- It enables managers to carry out self-assessment exercises effectively while giving investors, through the markets, the final say.
- Financial performance is likely to be enhanced if management is encouraged to report on the full range of its activities using the bases adopted by investors.

The committee is not breaking new ground in proposing this sort of assessment. The ASB's Financial Reporting Standard 3 has established the notion of setting out this sort of reporting via the profit and loss account and the statement of total recognised gains and losses, which is mainly used to report gains

and losses on fixed asset revaluations and foreign currency differences on retranslating the net assets of overseas subsidiaries.

But with the ASB expected to review the standard shortly, the committee believes the whole area is ripe for re-examination.

Among the principles it regards as necessary for study are the idea that - because the future is uncertain - financial performance cannot be reported as a matter of fact; that financial performance reporting should therefore have the twin aims of enabling investors to make their own assessments of underlying financial performance and encouraging managers to report on their own view of underlying financial performance; and that - to meet investors' needs and encour-

age management accountability - accountants need to accept that financial performance can and should be measured in a variety of complementary ways.

If that sounds like an attempt to allow plenty of room for manoeuvre, Mr Hodgkinson is unrepentant. Just as he and his colleagues have concluded that the ASB approach of having two statements has led to one being seen as more important than the other, so he is adamant that making the balance sheet similar to an inventory of various types of assets does not work either.

"That's a blind alley," he says, adding that it is up to businesses to experiment with presenting the bottom line as it is in their interests to improve the standard of their communications with investors.

Falling prices mark out 'losing' sectors

BY ROGER TRAPP

THE BATTLE against inflation tends to be characterised as a crusade in which the goal of prices rising at only marginal rates is shared by all. But for a growing number of businesses, such a situation is bad news.

Although general price deflation in the UK is unlikely, falling prices have become a reality in certain sectors, according to the business regeneration group at PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC), the accountancy firm. Indeed, the group believes the UK stock market is becoming sharply divided between "deflation losers" and "deflation winners". Steel, oil and basic chemicals, along with glass, paper, textiles and agribusinesses, are among the losers. Telecommunications, information technology and pharmaceuticals are among the winners.

All of the evidence suggests that the deflationary state is likely to be permanent or, at least, long-lived.

Bruce Gregory, a director of the group, said that the difficulty was being exacerbated by some managers' apparent refusal to accept the conditions. "All too frequently" he and his colleagues were shown projections that featured revenues growing, margins growing and prices increasing.

Mr Gregory said that having spent their whole working lives in a period of inflation, managers could not adjust to a situation in which this was no longer the case. Although PwC highlights certain sectors that fall into the losers' or the winners' camps, the dividing line is not precise. An examination of the evidence indicates that service is often the differentiator.

As recent results have shown, service organisations have seen strong growth in revenues at a time when other businesses have suffered. But service can be added to even hard-core manufacturing operations with a view to maintaining prices and improving revenues.

Mr Gregory pointed out how General Electric of the United States did this by offering training and consultancy when supplying power generators. "This has the double effect of giving a distinct competitive advantage and growing revenues."

Another way Mr Gregory sees companies using service to protect themselves in a deflationary environment is to concentrate constantly on customer satisfaction. This enables companies to compete on something other than price. Other conditions that enable companies to be "deflation winners" include:

- Exploiting a critical asset that is in short supply - for example, the shortage of skilled staff in many industries helps explain the success of consultancies, particularly in IT;
- Developing intellectual property - for example, patent protection in the pharmaceutical industry has contributed to the strong performance of this sector;
- Differentiating through product performance or design - for example, Gillette and Colgate have both been able to raise prices and gain market share through introducing products offering superior value;
- Compensating price decline with volume growth - for example, Vodafone is off-setting falling prices with rapid gains in sales;
- Outpacing falling prices with lower costs.

Mr Gregory said that for companies in the "loser" bracket, only "swift and far-reaching change offer a remedy". They should restructure capacity through a mixture of acquisitions, swaps, disposals and exits, reposition themselves as cost leaders through innovative business systems and shift to niches where prices are supported by unique value.

Deli-dollar offers route to business funding

BY HELEN JONES

PASTRAMI ON rye might not sound like an alternative to hard cash but in one American town, sandwiches are replacing dollar bills.

Frank Tortorello runs a deli in Great Barrington, Massachusetts. In 1989 he wanted to move to larger premises but the bank would not lend him the \$4,500 he needed, so he simply printed his own money.

He did not forge dollar bills - he launched "deli dollars" which customers could buy for \$8 and, at phased periods, cash in for \$10 of food. He sold the lot in a month and raised \$5,000. "Frank's customers were backing his loan because they felt they were helping him beat the bank and he was paying them back in sandwiches," says David Boyle, an alternative economist who details many other new forms of currency in his

book, *Funny Money*. Something strange then happened - the deli dollars started acting like real money. "Parents passed them on to their student children to make sure they were eating properly," said Mr Boyle. "Employers passed them to workers as Christmas gifts. The minister ate at the deli and soon notes started turning up in his collection box. Even the bank which refused Frank a loan in the first place circulated deli dollars."

Frank Tortorello's story has a feel-good folksy air to it, but alternative currencies are now used by major companies through customer loyalty programmes, phone cards and air miles. "Suddenly everybody

is issuing their own money," said Mr Boyle. "Take air miles - this is a currency issued by airlines which you can spend on an array of goods and services and which disappears when you've spent it. It doesn't carry on in circulation; it just gets deleted."

In the US, bartering between businesses and professionals is now worth \$8bn a year, say the futurologists Ira Matathia and Marian Salzman, of the consultancy group Y&R Brand Futures. They add: "At the centre of the industry - which is growing at 15 per cent a year - is the National Association of Trade Exchanges, an association of business owners and professionals who have joined together to trade surplus goods and service."

Ms Matathia and Ms Salzman believe bartering will grow because the

Internet has opened once-unthinkable global trading possibilities. But new money does not have to be about business. Community groups are involved. A Washington law professor, Edgar Cahn, was responsible for the launch of "time dollars", based on volunteer help in the community. Individuals register with their time dollar project what work they will do - from roofing to driving someone to the shops - and the things they need done in return.

"You can spend your time dollars on services from other people in the system," said Mr Boyle. "Or you could give it to an elderly relative who might need it more. Or you can keep it for a rainy day."

Time dollars or Lets (Local Enterprise Trading Systems) are now used in the US, UK, Germany,

Japan, New Zealand and Australia. In the UK, there are 450 Lets networks with 40,000 members. The London borough of Greenwich has a full-time Lets development officer. Lets members offer everything from gardening to massage. Liz Shepherd, of LetsLink UK said: "Lets offers a unique form of self-help and mutual aid, encouraging people to exchange services, time and occasional goods on an equitable basis."

The system is not without problems. The Department of Social Security has indicated credits earned through Lets should be treated as having monetary value for the purposes of calculating state benefits. Lets is lobbying the Government to clarify the situation.

Another potential problem is that the services on offer may be limited.

Sarah Fox was involved in a Lets scheme. "It was all a bit fey and hippie-dippy," she said. "It was great in theory but there are only so many massages that you want. I needed a decorator and someone to lay a patio but no one could offer that."

But Mr Boyle said: "There are Lets schemes in many countries and if Lets wasn't useful, people wouldn't join." He believes society is over-reliant on money, which can disappear overnight. "We need to underpin our lives by experimenting with new kinds of money, with different values embedded in them, which are more reliable in difficult times," he said. "It worked for Frank Tortorello."

Funny Money: In Search of Alternative Cash is published by HarperCollins at £14.99

PARTNERS

DICK POWELL AND RICHARD SEYMOUR

The two founders of the industrial design firm Seymour Powell met after completing art college. Their company now employs nearly 30 people and its clients include BMW and Casio. The pair are also broadcasters, having made the Channel 4 series 'Designs on Your...'



Powell (left) and Seymour: 'Our relationship is a bit like a marriage - you need a sort of open understanding' Nicola Kurtz

DICK POWELL: We didn't actually know each other at the Royal College of Art. I was doing industrial design and Richard was doing graphics. When I went back the following year to look at the degree shows, I saw his. It was more product than graphic. For example, he had a poster to warn people in factories about dust, printed as a sticky film. The more dust, the more the message became visible.

Meanwhile, I had set up in business and was lecturing part-time on a foundation course in St Albans. Richard did the same, and I got to know him as we both rode motorcycles. We used to travel up and down together.

Richard was in advertising. I was a product designer; he was a graphic designer. The skills you need are completely different, and graphic designers who have switched into industrial design are rare, because of the knowledge needed. But Richard obviously had that sort of interest.

Then I left my firm, so I was working on my own. Richard was getting fed up with advertising, saying, "All I am is a glorified Ilford. There's no sense of permanence to anything we do. It's all so ephemeral and transient. Who gives a stuff about this or that ad? If I ever get really fed-up, can I come and rent desk-space from you?"

I had a bit of spare space and I said "sure". One year, I think it was 1980, I came back from holiday and found Richard had moved in.

As you do when you are working with people in one room, you say, "What do you think of this?" He has an unbelievable drawing talent; a kind of on-board CAD system.

Let me give you an example: my parents moved out of their house and I wanted to draw it, but just couldn't remember the details. Richard had been there once, for two hours. He said: "It's okay, I'll draw it." He could just pull it back out, because he has a photographic memory.

We were working together on projects, but because both of us had been burnt in previous businesses, we didn't want to have partners ever again. After three years of gradually growing together, though, we later formalised the arrangement as Seymour Powell Ltd. We were working together in the best way partners can. It was by osmosis; his thinking was penetrating mine, and vice versa. First we set up a holding company, a shell which allowed us both to run our own business without the complexities of getting together. It was only two years later that we incorporated it.

Richard learnt a lot about how to be a product designer from me. For the first few years, what I said tended to be what went. But that gradually disappeared as he very quickly learnt how everything worked.

We sit opposite each other at what used to be called a "partner's desk". We have our own entrances and we are both very messy. We hardly ever see each other socially outside of a design context. But there's an awful lot about Richard I admire. He's a polymath, a very smart, guy with a huge intellect. He's brilliant at telling jokes. I was the guy who used to remember them and he was the guy who told them.

We laid down the rules at the be-

ginning; for example, if something is bothering you because you think it's wrong, you have to say so and don't hold grudges. We also set ourselves something we wanted to achieve: when the managing director of Sony is thinking of using a design company, one of the first three names he'll think of will be us.

Our relationship is a bit like a marriage - you need a sort of open understanding. There's no room for any kind of Machiavellian intrigue. We don't disagree about much. Eventually we will hammer out a solution. I tend to do more of the running of the business, and I'm more product-focused. Richard is interested in the wider issues and tends to let go of the structure. There have been occasions when I have had to shout: "What's going on here? This can't go on."

RICHARD SEYMOUR: The first time we consciously met was in the supplies cupboard at St Albans. We got chatting and it turned out we took a similar route. It was a transportation imperative that threw us together. We occasionally got together early on Sundays to drive our remote-controlled models in Battersea Park. I put the remote-control system into my motor bike; I hadn't realised it was massively illegal, but it used to amuse us outside pubs occasionally.

Dick has got an extremely good memory. We'd go to a client do and he would have in his mind the database of jokes and it would be my job to deliver them. When people say, "a 16-year partnership, wow, that's amazing", I think, "it is, actually". How has it hung together so long,

especially as we are both so competitive? It's not destructive, though - it's in a sort of relay. We always have to come up with one better.

I have learnt professionalism from Dick, who has a very strict streak; a sense of how it should be. That was quite a strong matrix within which to work. He would produce five options, each completely worked through, whereas others would do one. I can't imagine a better business partner than Dick Powell. He is scrupulously honest.

Although I trained as a graphic designer, I went into advertising and then film production design. But I was fed up of working my nuts off to create something that evaporated. More often than not we were compensating for the inadequacies in the product itself. Dick had taken on a property probably a little bit large for him and said: "Any time you want to leave, advertising..." He came back from a

holiday one day to find me. That was the crucible where Seymour Powell formed. Dick came in one morning and said: "Look, I've got this idea. I think we should form a company together. I think we should call it Seymour Powell."

I thought, here's how to win a man over, with my name at the beginning. When I am being brutally honest I describe myself as a hitchhiker. My thumb was out and off we went. Because of Dick's strictness, there were rules involved: we should concentrate on product design, and not entertain other disciplines. But product design is a very broad discipline. It's like a big playground.

Using phrases like "management style" to me is like, "what the hell does that mean?" Dick is much better at formal management. He manages to keep his desk tidier. He goes to levels of great mathematical precision whereas I am much

more of a wet-finger merchant. But we lead from the front.

The desk is a model for the company. We're like weathermen. The nice thing about having two of us is that a client can cleave to one or the other. I'm not the most conventional looking person in the world. But the wonderful thing for me is that I can just be exactly how I am and it doesn't seem to matter. If I wasn't working with Dick, I would probably be in an entirely different discipline. For some reason, I had a three or four-year attention span. I did a book with Michael Palin, the world's first children's hologram book: it sold 300,000 in hardback and was translated into 11 languages. If the partnership with Dick hadn't been so strong, I would have said "Books! Career! Change again!"

Dick and I work in very different ways. He sets up a dialogue on

paper. You can follow the genealogy and see his brain at work. My dialogue is internal. When Dick and I first worked together we would be sitting at the table, and he would be drawing, drawing, drawing and he would say: "For God's sake, draw something." I would say, "I am". Then the stuff would come out. I think he still finds it a curiosity. My sort of cathartic mechanism is great when it comes to putting down a believable concept, but it's absolutely hopeless for detail.

When we formed Seymour Powell, my knowledge of product design could be written on the back of a flag packet. Eric Cantona didn't say this, but he could have done: "A kite can only fly because it's attached to a string." One tends to think of restraint as a force that reduces effectiveness but in this particular case, restraint allows it to flow.

INTERVIEWS BY
RACHELLE THACKRAY



In the March issue:

Smart ideas for small spaces - a tiny bathroom, a poky kitchen, a box bedroom and a dinky study

The coolest stuff on the high street - 50 hip buys for under £50

Comfort furniture - the squashest sofas and squishiest chairs

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THE INDEPENDENT

WEDNESDAY REVIEW

COMMENT • FEATURES • ARTS • LISTINGS • TELEVISION



The man below is a British citizen. He is standing trial as a war criminal. The jury is now in Belarus, tracing the path he is alleged to have taken to the forest where 2,700 Jews were slaughtered. Leading them there is a man who says he saw the shooting

Into Domachevo's valley of death trudged the British jurors. The eight men and four women, dressed in brightly coloured, warm winter gear, were accompanied by Mr Justice Potts in a red skateboarder's hat. They walked in single file through the snow down a forest path in western Belarus that led towards a cemetery where 2,800 Jews lie buried in mass graves.

The jurors' guide was an elderly Belarusian man named Fedor Zan - still ramrod straight at 75 - who was dressed in a Soviet-era brown plastic coat, a fur hat perched on his head. Mr Zan is a man seeking justice for the alleged crimes of 57 years ago in the summer and autumn of 1942 when the Nazis invaded the Soviet Union and overran this border village, wiping out its Jewish population - with the help of locally recruited policemen.

Mr Zan is a former school friend of Anthony Sawoniuk, the defendant in Britain's first Nazi war crimes trial. He led the jurors, judge and legal officials through the snow-covered forest, with the freezing wind blowing on their faces, to the scene of the alleged crimes.

But this was more than a trudge through Belarus snowdrifts, it was a journey into the past and the horrors of the Holocaust. To witness this journey, a British court has been moved from the Old Bailey to this border town.

Mr Sawoniuk, a retired British Rail ticket collector aged 77 and from south London, is charged with four counts of murder during the Holocaust, although the prosecution alleges that he murdered 20 Jews between 19 September and 31 December 1942. He is the first person to come to trial for war crimes since Parliament passed legislation in 1991 that allowed police to start murder investigations for crimes allegedly committed during the Second World War by people who are now British citizens.

At the opening of the trial last Wednesday, John

Nutting QC, for the prosecution, said that Mr Sawoniuk was one of the first volunteers for the town's German-run police force, the Schutzmannschaft, after the Nazi invasion of the Soviet Union in the summer of 1941.

"This defendant executed Jewish men and women whose only crime was to be Jewish," he said. "The evidence indicates that the defendant was not only prepared to do the Nazi bidding but carried out their genocidal policy with enthusiasm."

Mr Sawoniuk has admitted that he was a volunteer policeman in the German auxiliary police force but has denied all charges of murder. Last week, his lawyer, William Clegg, told the court that he may have had no choice but to join the police force.

"There were lots of offers that couldn't be refused in Belarus after the German invasion," he said. "And one possibility is an invitation to join the local police." Mr Clegg pointed to the fact that the Germans executed two people in the Domachevo police force as evidence that membership may not have been voluntary.

Fedor Zan was sworn in as a witness last week at court number 12 in the Old Bailey. Yesterday he, the 12 jurors, counsels for the defence and prosecution and Mr Justice Potts made legal history. This visit to the Holocaust killing fields by the cemetery in Domachevo was the first time a British jury has travelled abroad to the scene of the crime.

Jurors have been given a potted history of the Holocaust and been supplied with maps and photographs of the area where the crimes occurred, in the western border region of the former Soviet republic of Belarus.

The tightly organised visit has been sanctioned at the highest level in the capital Minsk, with which Britain and other EU member states only recently re-established diplomatic relations.

The three-coach party of jurors, court officials and the accompanying press, has been provided with police escorts at every stage of their journey, while



militiamen bark orders at local inhabitants through megaphones, not to impede the progress of the party. Even the crossing at the notoriously slow Polish border was speeded up as our coaches were put through the diplomatic channel.

In its heyday before the war Domachevo was a popular spa town, where guests swam in the near-

militiamen bark orders at local inhabitants through megaphones, not to impede the progress of the party.

under the Soviets, and are now living as citizens of an independent Belarus. But much remains here of Soviet rule. Red stars and war memorials to the millions of Soviet soldiers who lost their lives fighting against the Nazis are commonplace. Local shops are meagrely stocked and many of the inhabitants of Domachevo's attractive, peasant-style wooden-framed houses still draw their water from nearby wells.

Remnants of the Soviet era remain, but the Jews are gone, buried in the mass grave at the town cemetery. Most were killed on the Day of Atonement, the holiest day in the Jewish calendar in September 1942. Their deaths are commemorated by a Soviet era memorial, an obelisk topped with a red star that says: "In memory of the victims of the German Fascist terror 1941-45."

As was the Soviet practice, the memorial makes no mention of the fact that those who lie in the mass graves under concrete plinths lived as Jews and died for their religion. This omission was commonly made for fear that sympathy for the Jewish victims of the Holocaust might lead to support for Zionism and the state of Israel. While there are plenty of Orthodox crosses at the cemetery, there is not a single Star of David in sight.

Immediately after the invasion in September 1942, Fedor Zan says he saw Mr Sawoniuk - at the time a member of the German volunteer police force - shoot 15 Jewish girls and women in the forest. While hiding in the bushes, Mr Zan saw "about 15 Jewish women of mixed ages with yellow badges on their clothing, standing in front of an open grave". John Nutting QC said, "He [Mr Sawoniuk] ordered the women to remove their clothes then shot them with the weapon."

Yesterday in the pine forests beside the Domachevo cemetery in the freezing wind, furies of snow whipping around him, Fedor Zan stood in the same thicket where he hid 57 years ago. He had hidden there, he told the judge and jury, while his former schoolfriend shot those 15 Jewish girls and

women. The jurors' journey through Domachevo took them back to the horrifying events of the Holocaust as it unfolded on the same doorsteps, and beside the same snow-covered pine trees, past which those girls and women had walked.

Jurors saw the house of number six Sverdlov Street, where Anthony Sawoniuk spent his childhood. A curious child peered from the window at the scrum of onlookers and television cameras, while gold-toothed habushkas gossiped in the snow-lined streets about the legends of unaccompanied visitors and the militia cars escorting them across the town.

From Sverdlov Street the jurors moved on to several key sites of the trial, including the site of the former police station where, during the war, Sawoniuk's first wife was caught in crossfire and killed in a partisan attack. The building now houses the city council.

Jurors were also shown the spot where Fedor Zan saw his aunt and her family being led away from the police station before they were executed. They saw Lenin Street, the road that marks the perimeter of the former ghetto. But it was the walk into the forest, where the Jewish girls and women were shot, that was most harrowing for the jurors.

One by one each juror, as well as the judge and accompanying lawyers, walked into the thicket from where Fedor Zan said he witnessed the shootings in the nearby cemetery.

Domachevo's cemetery was still and quiet after the British legal party departed yesterday afternoon. Like Auschwitz and Birkenau, Belzec and Dachau, it is a haunted place, and it's not hard to imagine that the freezing winter air somehow still carries echoes of the screams of those who died there, naked and terrified. For the ghosts of Domachevo's cemetery still haunt not only Belarus but Britain too, and other countries that fought the Germans but readily took in alleged Nazi war criminals, giving them the sanctuary they had denied to the Jews under Nazi rule.

BY ADAM LEBOR

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FASHION

Innocent locked up

Sir: I am dismayed by the Government's proposal to detain indefinitely and without any form of trial those whom it regards as being "a danger to the community". I have worked with people suffering from mental illness for over 25 years, and I find it difficult to accept that anyone is untreatable.

What is more worrying is the tendency of the health services and community to see anyone who acts in an unconventional manner as a risk. Is it really right that a person who has committed no offence should be detained only on the basis of perceived behavioural traits? We should remember how in the Soviet Union dissidents who were perceived as a danger to society were removed to psychiatric units and retained there indefinitely.

Whatever the safeguards the present government may set up, it is not difficult to imagine the future use of the system as a means of detaining and then ignoring those who are seen as in some way "different" or dissident.

MAVIS IREDALE
Whaley Bridge, Derbyshire

Sir: We are now asked to "confine", possibly for life, people who have committed no crime but might do so. The monstrousity of this proposal can only be mitigated by assurances that these unhappy innocents will nevertheless be guaranteed all those liberties denied to convicted criminals in addition to the loss of liberty.

I mean the liberty to eat what and when they please, to go to bed and get up and to dress as they please. They must have access to entertainment and recreation of their choice, the freedom to entertain visiting friends when they please, and to move freely within the outer limit of their confinement. These are the minimal liberties of innocent people.

In addition we must be sure that they receive the medical attention that they need and not that which serves the interests of the medical profession or the institution in which they are confined.

Finally we must be confident that they and the staff of that institution do not become institutionalised (as happens in ordinary prisons) because that would, of course, negate the possibility of any effective treatment.

I have sketched the minimal requirements of justice. They would cost a lot but I am sure that the Home Secretary's anxiety for the right kind of popularity will spur him on to find the money.

DAVID FPOCKOCK

Professor of Social Anthropology
University of Sussex
Lewes, East Sussex

Sir: Half of the people contacting our national advice service who have been diagnosed with a personality disorder have, in fact, been misdiagnosed.

Young people and people from ethnic minorities are particularly at risk of being wrongly labelled. The Government's plan for preventative detention of people with a personality disorder risks this problem being made worse.

A severe mental illness such as schizophrenia tends to strike in late adolescence or early adulthood. Left untreated, or treated badly, it can look very like personality disorder to professionals. It is a scandal that people with such a serious but treatable condition are left without help for an average of 18 months. The Government must make sure that there is a thorough assessment by skilled staff so that appropriate treatment is available at the earliest opportunity.

CLIFF PRIOR
Chief Executive
National Schizophrenia
Fellowship
Kingston upon Thames, Surrey

Green dogma

Sir: This week, delegates of the Oslo and Paris Commission (Ospar) are meeting in Hamburg to continue the process of creating the framework required to implement the recycling of

redundant North Sea oil platforms. This programme is expected to cost the oil industry around £10bn to £15bn.

While the prospect of forcing "environmentally hostile" oil companies to spend some of their profits on removing redundant material might produce a warm glow in the hearts of the public and green organisations, it is worth noting that the environmental evidence upon which this "green milestone" has been achieved is proving difficult to obtain.

Since I asked questions associated with this programme relating to energy balances, carbon dioxide burdens, landfill problems and the precise nature of the threat posed by redundant oil platforms in *Nature* some two months ago, senior green personnel have found it necessary to express regret that I have had the temerity to question the Ospar decision - for which they were largely responsible - in public. I have seen no more than opinionated historical material in justification of the Ospar decision.

I have no doubt that credible information about the different options for redundant oil platform management exists. How to obtain it, what it reveals and how it has been interpreted is another matter, given the triumphalism which has prevailed since the Brent Spar affair. Before asking oil companies to spend billions on what may well prove to be only a marginal improvement to the marine environment, perhaps zealous green organisations should look beyond an agenda designed to pillory the oil industry to those perennial environmental problems crying out for even modest funding.

The oil companies, the green movement, governments and the public would surely, if a review of the evidence justified it, welcome a revision of the Ospar decision to one which required a diversion of some of the oil companies' profits into sensible environmental improvement measures rather than one which is seemingly based

more on environmental dogma than on wisdom and analysis.

PETE WILKINSON
Pete Wilkinson Environmental
Consultancy
Halesworth, Suffolk
The writer is a former director of
Greenpeace

Genetic bullies

Sir: Successive British governments have allowed themselves to be browbeaten by a Washington in the pocket of American agribusiness and to plunk themselves between me and my grocer: "Eat genetically modified soya, or else!"

Charles Arthur (Comment, 16 February) wishes the scientists could get into a debate currently dominated by journalists, politicians and big business, who give me assurances in plenty but few facts. So do I. That is one reason why a restriction of the ubiquitous GM soya and a moratorium on further releases is essential - it would give me a chance to catch up and catch on.

Delaying would also give us all time to assess what the longer-term fall-out might be. In this small island we have a dangerously restricted (and dwindling) natural heritage of plants and wildlife. I'd not like to see what is left wiped out by superplants or herbicides in

favour of horizon-to-horizon monocultures where "no birds sing". Don't think it couldn't happen. I am just back from Costa Rica, where I saw the future as the US fruit companies would have wanted it to be.

MICHAEL ATKINSON
Ilkley, West Yorkshire

Sir: I would be interested to hear what legal position is, given the obvious lack of choice when visiting the supermarket. The food industry is surely leaving itself open to extensive legal action should anything go wrong. Supermarkets and those producing the GM crops should be forced to maintain a large insurance provision to cover future costs. If the insurance industry considers there to be no risk then the premiums would be minimal. Leave it to the professional pessimists to evaluate the risks.

IAN ECKERSALL
Torphichen, West Lothian

Motorised hunt

Sir: It is the pleasure of Joanne Welch and Michael Silverleaf (letter, 13 February) to walk quietly in the country; of others, to drive around following the hunt. The activities are not totally compatible and I share their dislike of motorised hunt-following. But in

fairness I have to ask: on how many days a year do the hunt and its followers come out?

IAN LESLIE
Ludlow, Shropshire

Sir: I am sure Mr Kidd and the 4x4 drivers he knows conscientiously avoid driving on byways with damaged surfaces (letter, 13 February). But far too many do not.

Today I rode along a bridlepath that has been classified as a "road used as a public path" (or RUPP). It was scarred with ruts a foot and more deep, and in one place a 4x4 driver had not been content to follow in the ruts left by his predecessors but had created a separate set of his own, so that the rider or walker was faced with four parallel ruts.

A green lane I know near Essendon used to offer a very pleasant ride in the 1960s and 1970s: one could enter almost the whole way along it. Today it is so rutted that many riders prefer to go round by the road instead.

The trouble is that too many bridleways have been classified as RUPPs or BOATs ("byways open to all traffic").

ROBERT NOWELL
New Barnet, Hertfordshire

Sir: Mr Geoff Wilson (letter, 9 February), writing in response to Duff Hart-Davis's feature "Two

legs good, four wheels bad", states that only 4 per cent of the country's rights of way may be used by vehicles. That is incorrect. The vast majority of rights of way may be used by vehicles. They are called "roads".

ALAN MANSFIELD
Ashby-de-la-Zouche, Leicestershire

Tough on disabled

Sir: I broke my neck playing football in 1978, which left me paralysed from the neck down and dependent on state benefits. Since then I have had to listen to a succession of Tory ministers labelling benefit claimants as scroungers, fraudsters, wasters and losers who sit contentedly at home waiting eagerly for the next benefit cheque to arrive.

I woke up on 2 May 1997 with a feeling of exasperation - not because I thought the election of "New" Labour would bring a decent income for disabled people, but because I believed it would mean a change in attitudes, and the end of vilification of the vast majority of people who live on benefits because they have no choice.

Sadly, with his parroting of Tory rhetoric and talk of the end of the "something-for-nothing welfare state", Tony Blair has indicated that the song remains the same: benefit claimants, no matter what their circumstances, remain social pariahs. Indeed, the assault on the disabled in particular has intensified to a level that even the Conservative leadership never contemplated. Being "tough" on the powerless may give Mr Blair and Mr Darling a feeling of political machismo, but from where I am sitting it is a chilling development.

I find it ironic that, a week after the "outrage" caused by Glenn Hoddle's implication that the disabled people are in some way to blame for their situation, Labour policy reinforces this view by intimating that the disabled are just another group who just will not help themselves.

CHARLES WHEELER
Norwich

Mention the war

Sir: Michael Naumann, the German Culture Minister, overlooks important facts when he accuses the British of an obsession with the Second World War. Britain neither started nor lost it. For Britain, the War was a question of the defence of democracy, and of survival, not an attempt at world domination. The former deserves to be remembered with pride, rather than treated as a mere footnote to the horrors of the Third Reich.

Since 1945 Germans have a horror of anything military. Any interest in matters military in the German mind, gets all too easily confused with militarism and war-mongering. The difference, however, is important, even more so in the light of Germany's new and more assertive role of participation in UN-sanctioned military action abroad.

JULIA KRAEHLING-SMITH
Belfast

Sir: I have been living in Germany for some years and find some British people's attitudes towards Germans rather embarrassing.

Germans have a better attitude. They play American war films dubbed into German on television, where invariably the Americans win, and no one bats an eyelid. Some of the younger generation, whose grandparents were only youngsters during the war, still feel guilt for the two world wars. And yet we British continue to perpetuate memories that should not be forgotten but handled with more sensitivity.

It is fine to mention the war in Germany, but not in the manner that some tabloids and football fans insist on doing.

GEOFF DAVISON
Wietmarschen, Germany

Off the rails

Sir: Your leading article of 12 February called for one of the train companies to lose its franchise. This ignores the legally binding nature of the contracts under which the companies operate.

My enforcement powers are strictly limited under the Railways Act and I can only terminate a franchise if an operator defaults on its contract. I cannot fine a company retrospectively for poor performance. What I can do is issue a provisional order threatening a financial penalty, payable only if the service does not improve. Or where I am satisfied that the breach has been remedied, I can take the route I have taken recently and negotiate a package of compensatory benefits for passengers.

"Renegotiation of performance targets and penalties is one area on which the Government may wish to issue guidance to the Shadow Strategic Rail Authority. They may also wish to consider strengthening the enforcement powers in the forthcoming legislation. Meanwhile, I will continue to use my existing enforcement powers to the full."

JOHN O'BRIEN
Director of Passenger Rail
Franchising
London SE1

Immortal Dawkins

Sir: Richard Dawkins and Stephen Pinker ("At the altar of the atheists", 13 February) are wrong about souls. The ghost in the machine is a confused, 17th-century idea that never had much going for it. They should read Aquinas, who holds that the soul is the form of the body.

A thought experiment on this theme: broadcast a digitalised recording of Jacqueline du Pré playing Elgar into space; blow up all worlds with atmospheres - the music is dead. But its form, exact, intensely personal, lasts as long as the radio signals radiate, which recent physics suggests might be for ever.

If we could digitalise the bodily histories of Dawkins and Pinker, they too could be preserved in ever expanding radiant arcs. Perhaps God has something like this in mind for them.

WILLIAM MYERS
Leicester

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Post letters to Letters to the Editor, The Independent, 1 Canada Square, London E14 5DL and include a daytime telephone number, fax to 0171 293 2056 or e-mail to letters@independent.co.uk. E-mail correspondents are asked to give a postal address. Letters may be edited for length and clarity.



Women in the Ring No 3: Linda van den Berg with trainer Billy Webster at Fitzroy Lodge, Lambeth, south London

David Sandison

IN BRIEF

written by an airline pilot (February 16). Performance is not a fixed quality. After 17 hours of working, our cognition and attitudes deteriorate; ability to drive equates to reaching the legal limit for alcohol. Even with the development of out-of-hours extended rotas and co-operatives, a maximum shift is still 23 hours. Safety in medicine should, as with pilots, begin with safe working conditions. It is ironic that

doctors are excluded from the recent legislation.

DR JOHN PITTS
Southampton

Sir: Your report on the problems associated with wild boar loose in England (13 February) raises the question why our gallant fox-hunters, so bent on freeing the country from vermin, do not swarm to exterminate this beast. Is it because the wild boar, a sharp-tusked creature of up to 400 pounds weight, can fight back?

FRANCIS BESWICK
Stretford, Greater Manchester

A candlelit dinner for two, with a blazing row thrown in

THIS MORNING I have received a letter which casts such an unusual light on British life that I feel I ought to pass it on to the gentle readership of *The Independent* without altering a word. Here it is:

Dear Mr Kingston,

Yesterday, on St Valentine's Day, I made the mistake of taking my wife out to a romantic dinner. It had not occurred to me before, but there must be many many couples who are hoodwinked by commercial pressures into lavishing a night out on each other on 14 February, and who therefore find themselves in a restaurant inhabited solely by romantic couples. So it was with us.

The restaurant we went to had only tables for two, and all those two were male and female, and we all

stared into each other's eyes and held hands a bit for fear of looking unromantic.

It would have been terrible except that there was one couple in the restaurant who did not obey the rules. They were quite an attractive couple, perhaps in their early thirties, but they had absolutely no concept of keeping their voices down. As a result, whenever any of us temporarily ran out of things to say, our attention strayed to this pair, and their conversation.

He was Jeremy, she was Cynthia, and to begin with they just talked about the children and the au pair, but then they got on to the subject of a woman called Jenny, and the tone changed. Jenny was obviously Cynthia's best pal. She obviously suspected that there was something going on between her husband and

Jenny, and from laughingly denying it, Jeremy suddenly lowered his voice (still audibly) and began defiantly admitting it.

"Jenny's a lot of fun," he said, "which is more than can be said of some people present, who seem to have lost their fun factor somewhere along the way."

"Fun in what way?" said Cynthia icily.

"Every way," said Jeremy. "Especially horizontally."

A choking sound rippled softly round the restaurant. It was clear that most of us were listening. But Jeremy and Cynthia couldn't care less. Within five minutes the row had escalated into a blazing argument, only ended by Cynthia getting to her feet, slapping him and walking out.

There was a ghastly silence as

Jeremy rubbed his cheek and brooded. Then...

"Waiter!" he cried. The waiter



MILES KINGSTON

"There was a ghastly silence as Jeremy rubbed his cheek and brooded. Then..."

Jeremy rubbed his cheek and brooded. Then...

"Waiter!" he cried. The waiter

came. Jeremy asked him, not for the hill, not even for a drink, but for the loan of a mobile phone. It was brought. He dialled a number. Someone answered.

"Darling!" cried Jeremy. "Why don't you pop over?"

"We couldn't believe it. He was asking someone else over to finish off the ruined meal. Surely it couldn't be..."

Ten minutes later the door opened and a lovely girl came in. "Jenny! Darling!" he cried, as if none of us were there, and they both sat down, giving us all a chance to study and comment on this new arrival. We didn't have a lot of time. Suddenly the door opened and - guess what? Cynthia swept back in! We thought for a moment there would be a battle royal, but they seemed to want to talk to

over like adults and all sat down together. It didn't last. Voices flared again, tempers frayed and broke, chairs scraped back - and what do you think happened? The two women linked arms and strode out together!

Not long after, the lone Jeremy, in tears by now, paid and went, and all the tables started chatting animatedly to each other, as you might imagine, and we all ended up the best of friends. And there it might have rested had I not accidentally bumped into Jeremy the next day in the street.

"Forgive a stranger for asking," I said, "but how did it all work out?"

"All what?"

"Last night... Cynthia, Jenny..."

"Oh, that." He laughed. "It worked out fine. We got paid."

"Paid?"

He pulled out a card. "Perhaps this will explain."

He passed on, and I looked at the card. It read: "Street Theatre and Restaurant Performers. No More Dull Dining Rooms and Silent St Valentine's! Delight your Diners with a Drama! Also Murder Mysteries, etc. etc." There then followed phone numbers, etc.

What do you think, Mr Kingston? Do you think that restaurants should be allowed to imitate unscrupulous BBC TV shows and fust fake fellow diners on an unsuspecting public in this underhand and deceitful way?

Yours etc

Miles Kingston writes: Never mind about that - just let me have the name of the restaurant. I want to book for next Valentine's Day...

THE INDEPENDENT

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A small helping of humble pie for the Prime Minister

LORD SAINSBURY says that any direct financial interest that he may have in biotechnology is held in a blind trust and is therefore above board, or at least below concern. He also says that he is an enthusiast for scientific advancement, including biotechnology.

There's the rub. We can accept, on the evidence so far, that the Science Minister has behaved properly. We can understand that, unlike Lord Simon and his BP shares, Lord Sainsbury cannot unload his huge, billion-pound personal shareholdings. A blind trust is the approved solution to this dilemma.

But this still leaves a minister intimately connected with the food trade, who is personally enthusiastic about bio-engineering and its potential for British business, right at the heart of a government that has come under heavy fire for its policy on the issue. The very fact that Lord Sainsbury said that he had had to absent himself from a recent Cabinet committee meeting on biotechnology gives the lie to Downing Street's suggestion that he is really concerned with science and not food.

It's no good the Prime Minister dismissing, as he did yesterday, the whole furore as a storm in the media drinking-cup. The press may have made a right muddle of the science, and got itself into a lather about much that has been here for years. It could even be accused of making far more than it should have done out of a potential conflict of interest in Lord Sainsbury's case. There is something unhealthy at the moment in the press's desire to hound a man as soon as it scents blood.

But what cannot be waved away is the simple fact that people are instinctively concerned by anything that messes around with what they and their children eat. They worry - rightly or wrongly - about the safety of their food. They distrust, the more so after BSE, scientific pronouncements and the value of government assurances. They not only want testing of new technology to be carried out, they want it to be seen to be carried out. And they worry about developments pushed by large corporations.

Which brings us back to Lord Sainsbury. It is not his fault that he is embroiled in this mess. He is, by all accounts, a decent, honourable chap who wants to be left alone to do his job and promote science in industry. There is, at this stage, no reason why he should resign. Tony Blair is right about that.

But the Prime Minister must learn from this food furore. First, he should start to appreciate that people have legitimate concerns about the food that ends up in their bellies. And second, he must understand that while businessmen can bring certain fresh qualities to government, they're not omniscient and can lead to more trouble than they are worth.



Some answers to the Kurdish question

THE KURDISH PKK party which has organised the mass take-over of Greek embassies around Europe, is a hard outfit. No one should be in any doubt about that. Nor should there be any doubt about the party's leader, Abdullah Ocalan, whose rapid ejection from the Greek embassy in Nairobi and extradition to Turkey has set off this explosion of protest. The leader of the PKK for the last 14 years, he is a terrorist with an appalling record of murder and torture. But, like the IRA, the PKK is a mirror image of the forces that have suppressed it. There are people for whom history has shown no remorse. The Kurds are one of them. Caught in their mountain homeland at the point where Turkey, Syria, Iraq and Iran all meet, they have suffered the fate of being continually hounded by those nations.

On the whole the Iraqi Kurds have come out with a degree of dignity and some democracy, with their suffering at the hands of Saddam Hussein rightly condemned and their interests partially protected by the allies. The Kurds from Turkey have been less fortunate. Oppressed with the utmost brutality by the Turkish army, they have responded in kind, matching terror for terror. They have also, as we see now, taken their cause to Europe, in demonstrations, assassinations and hostage-taking that have shown as much organisational sophistication as ruthlessness. Seizing Greek official buildings in 10 cities simultaneously cannot be interpreted as an outpouring of spontaneous anger. It is clearly the result of a plan long laid, probably directed originally at Italy when it was considering extraditing the PKK leader, now directed at Greece.

The demonstrations and occupations must be ended decisively, and Turkey and Greece must be supported. Whatever the rights and wrongs of causes, the principles of extradition and the sanctity of diplomatic representa-

tion are far too crucial for compromise to be acceptable.

That said, Europe must also accept that the Kurds have been forced to take their struggle outside their own countries, and have the means to do so. There are now Kurdish communities throughout Europe, most of whom are genuine victims of political oppression at home with a right to asylum abroad.

At the same time, Turkey, a determined applicant for European Union membership and a stalwart ally in Nato, must be considered as part of a wider Europe.

The one fact needs to be balanced with the other: Turkey should be encouraged in its drive to join the EU. It should be supported in its extradition and trial of Ocalan. But at the same time it should be quietly made clear that the trial must be fair, and seen to be fair and that, in the end, the Turkish government will have to exercise democratic control of its security forces in the east of the country and deal by negotiation with Kurdish demands for autonomy. That is what being part of modern Europe means.

The Government must listen to our fears about GM food

WHEN CONFRONTED by a foreigner who does not speak English, it is our national trait to shout Very Very Loud in the hope that amplification will assist understanding. Similarly, the Government's response to the public's failure to heed one of its messages is simply to say the same thing again and again in the belief that we poor dull creatures will get the point in the end. In the handling of public fears about genetically modified food, however, repetition will not be enough to turn back the tide of doubt and confusion. Food scares are far more difficult to defuse than the other vicissitudes that make life fraught for governments. When it comes to what we eat and feed our families, we do not fall as readily as usual into party loyalties, nor do we give a leader, even one as popular as Mr Blair, the benefit of the doubt. This is why he owes every Government's basic nightmare - a popular coalition of resistance spanning all social classes and political persuasions. Faced with a range of resistance that includes Greenpeace, John Redwood and the Mothers Union, the Government must realise that its damage-limitation strategy is doing everything but limit the damage.

Tony Blair has prospered as a politician because he embodies reassurance. People are inclined to believe what he says; this has been his greatest political capital. When he says that he is "sure" that GM foods are safe and can lead to "faster, healthier and cheaper products", he is squandering this vital advantage. First, we know that he doesn't

really know whether his statement is true. Scientists are divided on the long-term consequences of consuming genetically modified foods. Mr Blair has stuck his neck out too far in the direction of unbridled optimism and therefore we take his becalming words with a pinch of unmodified salt.

In the role of Lord Sainsbury, the Science Minister who owns a GM patent, is a major complication. David Sainsbury is a thoughtful and popular businessman, brimming with ideas to stimulate economic growth, and a long-standing proponent of a broad centre-left coalition in British politics. He has every New Labour virtue, except, in this case, intuitive political judgement.

Lord Sainsbury was not sufficiently open about the nature of a biotechnology product he owns - one integral to the process of genetic modification - which was transferred into a blind trust three days after he entered the Government. The claim that he absents himself from discussions on GM food policy in the Cabinet subcommittee on bio-technology also looks flimsy.

An odd defence is rolled out in such cases, namely that the businessman who enters politics is too naive to realise that there may be appearances of conflicts of interest between their assets and their new activities. The affable Minister for European Trade, Lord Simon of Highbury, was spared censure on these grounds when it was revealed that he had not declared substantial shares in an off-shore trust. But this excuse washes less white every time it is used. It looks very grey



ANNE MCELVOY

When it comes to what we eat and feed our families, we do not fall readily into party loyalties

In Lord Sainsbury's case, after Lord Simon, not to mention the interminable complexities of Geoffrey Robinson's affairs, businessmen turning their hand to government should be aware that it is not sufficient to transfer their previous dealings to a blind trust and say as little as possible about them. The more often a minister is revealed as having stashed away some interest that might affect executive decisions, the less convincing are Mr Blair's guarantees that his government is transparent and sleaze-free. You cannot simultaneously send the two messages "What you see is what you get" and "What you see is the bits of this minister's lucrative interests that are not bundled up in an anonymous trust until he leaves office." Businessmen-politicians must pay the price of exposing

their existing interests and assets.

Downing Street says the Prime Minister is "frustrated" by the way his message is being drowned out by an alliance of concerned folk and media hype. Certainly, on the topic of GM foods, rationality is thrown to the winds. Yes, there is an outbreak of Mad Headline Writer's disease in parts of the media - first prize to *The Express* for an understated little number that read, "Human genes in GM food: protests at move to 'cannibalism'".

But Downing Street's complaint is a bit like Rex Harrison in *My Fair Lady* demanding, "Why can't a woman be more like a man?" It is a proposition reasonable only in its own, strictly limited terms. Mr Blair's "frustration" rests on the expectation that the public should always believe that he is right on every occasion. He is in danger of believing the mythology that his message is sacred and cannot possibly be proved wrong.

This tendency has unnerved me for some time. At the last party conference, I was dining with a senior minister on the day questions were first raised about GM foods. I ventured some worry about the contents of my pasta. To this the minister snorted that my reservations were mere peasant suspicion of technology. He would happily eat any such products, he said. It struck me that my suspicion was based on the natural conservatism of the consumer, aware of the relatively low level of information and bargaining power I possess compared to the might and profit margins of the food industry. The minister, on the other hand, erred vastly on the side of in-

caution because he had accepted so uncritically the Government's embrace of business. What surprised me was not so much my companion's wild abandon to experimental habits, but his cavalier expectation that the public should share it.

Even now, Mr Blair is pursuing the strategy of slapping down consumer doubts, rather than accepting that they exist, and answering them. On presentation, the Government has erred uncharacteristically. Using Jack Cunningham, a machine politician best known for his defence of the nuclear industry, as the front man for the pro-GM policy, is an own goal. In most households, decisions about what is eaten are taken by women. If I may presume to minister to the spin doctors, might it not be a better idea to wheel out a sturdy female to replace Nuclear Jack in the battle to convince us that eating hi-tech tomato paste will not turn us into aliens?

But presentational skills alone will not dispel the need for a more thoughtful approach to the consequences of genetically modified food. The Government must stop telling us that we are foolish to be concerned. That never reassured anyone. Far better to tighten testing and licensing procedures along the same lines as those applied to new drugs on the market and to emphasise, even after testing, that clear labelling is essential. As Mr Blair said after his election, politicians must never forget that they are the servants of the people who put them in a position of trust. That means taking the public's fears seriously - not just shouting them down.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"It's a dreadful thing to have done."
Margaret Cook,
ex-wife of the Foreign Secretary, on her memoirs

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"God in creating Man somewhat overestimated his ability."
Oscar Wilde,
Irish writer

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MONITOR

ALL THE NEWS OF THE WORLD
World comment on developments in the
Kosovo peace talks

DOES THE president believe that words on paper will cause either side to budge from its entrenched position? Congress can stop this misguided mission by the simple expedient of refusing to fund it. It should consider carefully how that power might be useful.
Northwest Florida Daily News, US

THE SERBS have been unreasonable by demanding that the Kosovars should sign the prin-

ciples before negotiations proceed further. They created the problem by unleashing a reign of terror in this province with a population comprising 90 per cent ethnic Albanians. Now they are making reconciliation and political accommodation difficult. The atrocities committed by them could easily cause their record of war crimes in Bosnia to pale into insignificance if the war in Kosovo continues.
Dawn, Pakistan

IT IS distressing to see Washington threatening aggression against what is an independent member of the UN. It is important for the other permanent members to take note of the latest US threats, which, if carried out, will drive yet another nail into the disintegrating coffin of security and law. Yugoslavia's neighbours need to be wary of the

manner in which policies are driving Kosovo towards independence.
Times of India

CLINTON HAS committed 4,000 GIs for a peacekeeping mission in Kosovo. Congress should be involved before the president commits more US troops to another peacekeeping mission. Putting GIs in harm's way demands caution and approval from the people's representatives. Getting Congress's blessing should have come before Clinton promised the troops.
San Antonio News, US

KOSOVO NEED not become another Bosnia-style quagmire. The best way to prevent that is to make sure that the plan is carried out to the letter. If peace is not the result of this well-defined mission, committing our troops to patrol the streets of Kosovo is an unacceptable back-up measure.
The Free Lance-Star, US



PANDORA

A NEW "currency" will soon start changing hands in the nation's shops and supermarkets. The currency, which refugee groups have dubbed the "asylet", is a voucher system about to be introduced by the Home Office as a means of giving cashless refugees the opportunity to obtain food and basic toiletries. The notes are being designed by Home Office staff, one wonders whether they will be able to resist the lure of using the likeness of our great leader, Mr Blair, in place of the more traditional image of Her Majesty.

THE ROYAL Opera House chairman Sir Colin Southgate's speech at the House's topping-out ceremony yesterday was interesting not only for his continual use of the phrase "topping off" instead of "topping out". He also lavished praise on the award-winning ROH orchestra; several of its soloists gave recitals to "top off" the ceremony. Can this be the same orchestra that Sir Colin wanted to stand down for a year, under his cost-cutting plan?

THERE WAS an other-worldly feeling to the EMI Songbook launch at the Abbey Road Studios, Ralph Steadman, the cartoonist, and the author Iain Banks were among the celebrities who regaled the audience with their wordy wit, while examples of their ideas for album compilations adorned the walls. But in the upstairs studio, Pandora was told, the composer John Williams and the London Symphony Orchestra were fine-tuning the music for the Star Wars prequel, *The Phantom Menace*. Checking back with the studio, she was told by a spokesperson: "We can't say anything this week, maybe next week we will." However, the force behind the LSO confirmed the sessions – which ended last night.

THE INDUSTRY Minister Ian McCartney doesn't mind his words. The former chef was recently grilled in a Commons

corridor by the Tory MP John Bercow over why restaurant owners should pay a minimum wage to staff who receive sizeable tips.

"My goodness, I often give waiters a £5 tip," Bercow reportedly bellowed at the minister.

Bringing his catering experience to the fore, McCartney growled: "Listen son, pompous idiots like you got a damn sight more than soup in their soup."

THE BROADCASTING Monitoring Company, a sister company of the *Financial Times*, is not living up to its name. Yesterday it sent some information to the Amalgamated Engineering and Electrical Union, addressing it to Charlie Whelan. The high-profile spin doctor, who enjoyed a spot of publicity recently when he resigned as press secretary to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, left the union about five years ago. Perhaps someone ought to provide the monitoring organisation with a cuttings service.

THE FORMER lover of President Clinton, Gennifer Flowers (pictured) is to dine with the Master and Fellows of University College, Oxford – where Clinton was a Rhodes scholar. The dinner is expected to take place tonight, two days before Flowers is due to address the Oxford Union on "Surviving Sex, Power and Propaganda". Pandora would love to be a fly on the wall at this function. Given that Gennifer described Clinton as "lustful and insatiable in the bedroom" her after-dinner banter with the mighty academics of Oxford could be highly educational.

IN A moment of madness, a friend of Pandora's bought a rabbit from a butcher. When he got it home, he realised that he had no idea how to cook it. Taking his

life into his hands, he called up the Michelin-starred chef Gordon Ramsey, not usually noted for his charm. When Pandora's friend was asked to identify himself, he meekly replied that he was a member of the public. The line momentarily went dead before Ramsey answered, and spent the next 15 minutes giving instructions.

Pandora wonders whether Mr Ramsey would be kind enough to give her advice over the telephone on how to boil an egg. Or would that be pushing it?

Pandora can be contacted by e-mail at: pandora@independent.co.uk

Politicians are such tragic groupies



DAVID LISTER

As self-made men and women, rock stars are often right-wing, selfish and materialistic

terms of street cred. Following last year's Brits, Peter Mandelson was asked, before his own exit from the Cabinet, how many members of the Cabinet had ever attended a concert at the Wembley Hall. He changed the subject.

Labour governments choose their stars carefully. They must have mass popular appeal and epitomise the height of fashion, cool and

cutting edge. It's in fact far from a New Labour phenomenon. It was old Labour in the form of Harold Wilson who first exploited the public relations coup of inviting them to Downing Street soirées. John Lennon even referred to him as "that nice Mr Wilson" on television. How could Edward Heath conducting a symphony orchestra compete with that?

Wilson's strategy was a seemingly clever one. The coming 1970 election was to allow 18-year-olds to vote for the first time. A trendy PM with pop star mates was more likely to get those first-timers on his side. But while The Beatles were built to last, some of Wilson's other guests at those soirées had a shelf life on their coattails. Who now remembers Kenny Lynch, a regular Downing Street visitor who repaid his hospitality most thoughtlessly by becoming solidly middle of the road?

That's the trouble with rock stars. They, their managers and their record company bosses are unpredictable. Worse. As self-made men and women they are more often than not right-wing, selfish and materialistic.

Blair has already had a lesson in

the rock world's curious political mix of Sixties hippie philosophy and self-centred individualism. Blair's Damon Albarn savaged Labour at a press conference devoted to Labour's further-education policy. Alan McGee, the man who discovered Oasis, was moved to describe Labour's welfare-to-work scheme as "soul-destroying, incredibly naive, ill-judged, unfair and Draconian, penalising the lifeblood of our cultural future".

In poppeak that counts as a measured response. As does Primal Scream's Bobby Gillespie who, when asked if pop stars should go to Number Ten, replied: "Only with a pound of Semtex".

And the Cabinet has not yet responded to Jarvis Cocker's observation, not to be found in the New Labour manifesto, that "if you wanted to be in a band, or you wanted to be a painter, or you wanted to do anything, you'd go to the dole".

Logical? Who cares? Politically inconsistent? Probably. Essentially parasitic. Almost certainly. That is the core of a rock star's philosophy. And they are all the more charismatic for it. It is from politicians that

we expect a measure of consistency and statesmanship, and a distancing from the mercenary, back-of-a-record-sleeve ideologies of the stars.

But there is a much better reason why New Labour should end its flirtation with pop, a flirtation that sometimes resembles the awe-struck blind devotion of the groupie. It is not just the resentment of the rest of the arts world, though that has certainly helped lead to Blair and Smith dropping all references to Cool Britannia.

It is a gut feeling, even – perhaps especially – among Blair's own generation, that rock equals rebellion; that both popular culture and society in general need an outrageous, nonconforming, egocentric element with a concentration span as short as a CD single. That this nonconforming element should inhabit a fantasy world of riches, sex, poetry, all in Bacchanalian dimensions.

That Dr Mowlam is a gifted politician but not a rock chick. That John Prescott should not share a hall with Chumbawamba. That one of rock music's targets should be the government of the day. As, inevitably, Mr Blair, one day it will be.

Don't privatise the Tube by the back door, Mr Prescott



KEN LIVINGSTONE

We'll modernise the Tube, but we won't be helped by the pitiful dullards who run the system now

ANYONE WHO braved the Tube strike to come to my Monday night monster meeting at Methodist Central Hall would, of course, be left in no doubt over the immediate issue on everyone's mind – the undemocratic attempt to rig the ballot that will select Labour's candidate for mayor of London. However, it was also clear that the first priority that Londoners will want their new mayor to have is sorting out their daily transport nightmares.

Although London's traffic was worse than normal during the RMT's two-day Tube strike, for most travellers it was a question of just being a bit worse than the normal daily drudgery of trying to get to and from work, with a lot of the impact reduced due to the school half-term cutting the number of cars on the roads at crucial times.

In one office after another across London, people's main topic of conversation is no longer who's bedding whom in the soaps, but who had the worst nightmare journey into work that morning. When you get to work, your productivity will be down owing to the congestion and the tension of the journey. So far this year I have been trapped in two hour-long delays on the Jubilee Line, and it has got so bad that I routinely have to allow an extra 10 to 15 minutes on any journey to cope with unexpected delays.

Congestion is destroying our quality of life, even life itself. Just by breathing the atmosphere, Londoners double their chance of getting lung cancer, half of all the children who live on a main road have asthma, and every winter car fumes build up into a toxic smog that kills only hundreds if we're lucky, but thousands in a bad year. London certainly has all the worst transport problems that afflict Britain's other cities – but on a larger scale, simply because of the size of the city.

This is why John Prescott has decided to let London be the test-bed for his new transport policy, giving the new mayor powers to tackle congestion years before the rest of the country can expect them.

If Loooodo can't get it right, then other cities have little chance. London also has a slight advantage: Mrs Thatcher never got around to privatising our public transport entirely, in the way that devastated services in much of the rest of Britain.

It's the fear that Labour's public-private partnership (PPP) for the Tube is privatisation by the back door that has provoked Mr Prescott's old union into a two-day strike. When London's buses were semi-privatised drivers lost about £35 a week from their pay causing an exodus of many of our best and most dedicated public transport servants and creating a high-turn-over, semi-casualised workforce.

This strike would never have happened if London Transport's chauffeur-driven bosses had been prepared to give a simple guarantee that the PPP will not lead to cuts in

wages and conditions (although I am personally in favour of cutting the conditions of some London Transport bosses by taking away their chauffeur-driven cars and forcing them to use the abysmal service they so cynically impose on Londoners). London Transport bosses, however, clearly hope to use Mr Prescott's new finance initiative as a cover for getting rid of more staff and bumping up fares at an even faster rate.

Our problems arose because the Treasury wanted to sell off the Tube to the highest bidder. Though John Prescott was able to defeat this scheme, he was blocked by the Treasury from raising the £700 he needs to deal with the backlog of Tube repairs he inherited from the Tory government in the most simple way – by increasing London's business rate and council tax.

The PPP is the result of a compromise, although really it's just borrowing money under a different guise. Even if the Treasury was opposed to funding Tube repairs by tax increases, there was no reason why it could not have given London Transport the power to borrow on the markets by raising a simple bond issue. It's still out clear how much more interest Londoners will have to pay because we are going for the more expensive option of PPP.

It may be a year yet before we see the final figures, and John Prescott has made it clear that PPP will go ahead only if those figures add up.

It's not surprising if in this long period of confusion, trade unionists have taken industrial action to defend their jobs. This has led the extreme right to demand that the Government bring in legislation to ban strikes in the public sector. This classic barmy authoritarian approach overlooks two important facts. First, in those jobs where strikes have been banned, such as



Passengers board another overcrowded train on the Tube

the police service, the state has had to undertake to pay a higher level of wages in order to make the ban acceptable to those it is imposed upon.

Second: after the right to vote, the right to withdraw his or her labour is the most important freedom the individual has. There is not a democracy anywhere in the world that does not have a free trade union movement, and it is significant that one of the first actions in any Stalinist or Fascist regime has been the suppression of free trade unionism. I'm confident that in the end John Prescott will find a mechanism that allows us to modernise the Tube, but he is unlikely to be helped by the pitiful dullards who currently run the system.

Ever since they escaped from the control of the GLC their main priority, apart from lining their own pockets with huge salary hikes and perks, has been to get rid of as many staff as possible. Conductors were sacked even though it meant a huge increase in the time buses have to wait at stops.

Tens of millions of pounds that

should have been spent on repairs to Underground track and trains was wasted introducing automatic ticket barriers just so that ticket collectors could be added to the dole queues. Every time I'm caught in another Tube delay because of signalling or track failure, I think about the cost of those new ticket barriers.

Although the railways allow passengers to claim money back when delayed inordinately, to be really effective the cost of these rebates should come out of the salaries of the rail bosses and the dividends otherwise paid to shareholders so as to bring to bear "the spur of competition and the rigours of the market" if I may be so bold to quote Tony Blair's replacement for Clause Four.

If we could get our buses, Tubes and trains once again running for the benefit of the passengers, people would be willing to leave their cars at home. But that is the way it must be done. Improve public transport first, rather than impose a culture of blame and penalties on the motorists.

THE INDEPENDENT
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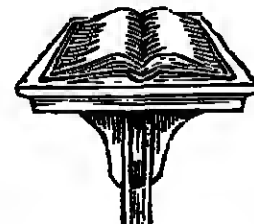
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The dangers of paternalism



PODIUM

PERRI 6
From a lecture by the
Demos research
associate delivered to
the Westminster Ethical
Policy Forum

IT IS only 40 years or so since the late Douglas Jay infamously declared, with a confidence that few politicians in the developed world would claim today: "There are some things about which the Gentlemen in Whitehall really does know best."

Whatever the Gentlemen in Whitehall may have thought, most of us today think that the state has rather fewer rights to do us good without our consent than do our families and friends, and perhaps even fewer than the professionals such as doctors, lawyers and ministers of religion to whom we turn.

When may government pursue our benefit, as politicians or officials see it, when we have not specifically authorised them to do so?

Welfare to work programmes are sometimes described as paternalistic. The American professor and advocate of "hassling" the poor and unemployed, Lawrence Mead, has described them as "the new paternalism", because they involve coercion.

Actually, I am far from sure that coercion in these cases is

principally justified on paternalistic grounds.

Typically, at least in the case of the British government's New Deal, the justification offered is that citizens have obligations to taxpayers in a kind of social contract, only to burden them with the costs of their upkeep in emergencies and to keep that burden to a minimum. An obligation upon citizens not to harm other's interests is not coercion for their own good.

In general, it should be said that there are real risks in reinforcing weak arguments for paternalism with the non-paternalistic argument that citizens have a duty not to dump the costs of their support on the taxpayer, or not to harm others in the way in which they live their lives. I think on balance that there are such moral duties.

But it does not follow that the Government has the right to use the force of law to enforce those moral duties in every case.

For example, in many cases of health-related behaviour, the others who may be harmed, however, are principally taxpayers, who may have

to pick up the bill for the medical care. Now that the NHS is seeking to recover these costs from the vehicle insurance plans of the individuals affected, the ground for government paternalism may be undermined. However, the principle states that, if individuals were to consent to the regulation – and many it seems clear would – it is permissible even if there are additional contractual requirements upon

individuals for any private insurance they may have covering such risks.

On the other hand, the beef-on-the-bone ban seems to fail several limbs of the test. It is far from clear that citizens would consent if we were told the full information available to ministers at the time it was imposed, and if the real reason was not one of public health but of negotiating strategies in Europe in seeking the lifting of the export ban, then it is not even clear that the Government's explanation of the ban was in good faith.

The evidence seems to be lacking of great diligence in finding out what would work to prevent Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease. The evidence might have justified paternalistic health warnings or the publication of information for consumers to make up their own minds, but not a paternalistic ban.

In the last fortnight, there has been a huge moral panic in the newspapers about genetically modified foods. William Hague has declared his party to be in favour of an outright ban, and the Prime Minister has expressed alarm too.

I don't want to spend any

time tonight on the pseudo-science peddled by many of the alarmists, or to devote any time to the positive environmental benefits that might flow from getting genetic modification right.

I will just say that some of the causal mechanisms of gene flow between species they claim to be worried about are, for all practical purposes, biologically inconceivable, and I do want to point out that no one has ever come up with a single case of harm to human health from any of the mainstream genetically modified foods in the supermarkets.

Fundamentally, however, I do want to suggest that we need to think long and hard before we rush to banning anything. There are good reasons for giving consumers information on food labels about what they are choosing, and letting them decide for themselves. But there is no possible justification for politicians claiming to know better than I or any other shopper or diner does what kind of food we want to eat, and banning things that many of us may well want. That is paternalism too far.

Truth is no stranger to fiction



DEBORAH ORR
Kureishi's ex-wife reacted angrily: 'He calls it a novel. It's total hypocrisy. Nobody believes it'

WHAT ARE we to make of Roger? We meet him when he has been acrimoniously separated from his wife for a year. He has just collected his two young sons, aged five and a half and four, from the an pair, and taken them to the park.

He lets them loose in the adventure playground, then reads his paper, until it starts raining. Then he takes them to the park's café, orders them doughnuts and chats up the woman at the next table, until another woman points out to him that his two boys are at the far end of the room, rolling around on top of another boy who is screaming about being bitten. He then hustles them out of the café.

His parenting for that day apparently complete, he takes the boys back to their home. He has forgotten that the locks have been changed, so he and his children wait on the porch in the rain until darkness falls and their mother comes home from work.

Roger, however, has a problem. He is wearing his new chocolate-coloured suit and his beautiful new loafers, for that evening he is going to a publishing party, where he is to meet a woman he likes. He needs to borrow an umbrella, or his outfit and his *sang froid* will be ruined. His wife refuses to give him one, which incenses him so much that the two of them have a violent row in front of the children.

Roger has everything in common with Jay, who we encountered almost a year ago, in Hanif Kureishi's best-selling short novel, *Intimacy*. Jay talked us through his last night at home with his partner, Susan, before he walked out on her and his two sons, aged five and three. Perhaps the similarity of the two men isn't surprising, for Roger is the protagonist of 'The Umbrella', a new short story by Kureishi published in the latest edition of the literary magazine *Granta*.

Intimacy caused quite a furore when it was published, not only because Jay behaved so dreadfully and so self-justifyingly, but also because Kureishi himself had left his wife and young twin sons a year before that. Kureishi's ex-wife, Tracey Scofield, reacted angrily. 'He says it's a novel, but that's an absolute abdication of responsibility. It's total hypocrisy... You may as well



Hanif Kureishi has not disguised a memoir as a novel, but used his own experiences to reveal universal truths through the medium of fiction

Peter MacDiarmid

call it a fish. Nobody believes that it's just pure fiction.'

Kureishi's sister Yasmin also advertised her anger at the publication of *Intimacy*. She didn't object to the contents, but to what her brother had been saying in promotional interviews about his own life. 'The memory of my father I hold very dear and I will do anything in my power to ensure it is not fabricated for the entertainment of the public or for Hanif's profit.'

Poor old Hanif, caught between two stools. Damned if he serves up reality as fiction, damned if he serves up fiction as reality. What a good job he doesn't work too much in television, where both of these activities earn anger not only from one's family but from the media, regulatory boards and the viewing public as well. What a shame he doesn't work in Washington, say as President of the United States or something, where such matters are not deemed nearly so important. Truth really has become the most difficult of concepts.

I didn't think I could be shocked any more by the lies and double-standards of the Lewinsky affair. But the scrutiny which the journalist Christopher Hitchens has been

subjected to has put the garnish on the BSE sandwich. Hitchens, many friends and fellow democrats have declared, must be cast out of polite society for his part in the President's hounding.

What was his crime? He noticed that Sidney Blumenthal, a top White House aide, had lied on the witness stand, denying he had spread rumours that Monica Lewinsky was a 'stalker' and 'a predatory and unstable sexually demanding woman'. Since Blumenthal has told Hitchens those very things, he begged to contradict, swearing an affidavit that Blumenthal had said this not just to him but to others as well. The bastard told the truth.

Rather like those bastards who made *Chickens*, a documentary about illegal gay prostitution in Glasgow. Everything in the harrowing documentary was true, except that the 'clients' shown in the programme were not actually clients. Channel 4, which screened the programme, has been fined £1m for this deception, even though the people selling the underage gay sex, the actual victims with whom the documentary was concerned, were perfectly genuine. The programme makers certainly

made a stupid mistake: in not informing viewers that the 'clients' were being posed by actors, but since in television, as in life, 'authenticity' has become more prized than truth it's easy to understand why they did it.

But it is certainly strange that you are condemned for including truth in fiction, you are condemned for telling the truth in the 'trial of the century', and you are condemned for revealing the truth about gay prostitution. It's not just on television that shows that we can't tell truth from fiction any more. It's everywhere.

Why should this paradox have emerged, when it seems that our appetite for truth is so insatiable, and our need for verity so unquenchable? We can't get enough of autobiography and memoir. Every newspaper has to have several columns about the emotional traumas of real-life people. If there isn't a 'docusoap' on television then there's bound to be a chat show (it may be trivia, but it must be true).

The work of politicians, actors, musicians and football managers can now, it appears, only be understood by close reading of their opinions and open discussion of their

personal situations. And the most admired artists are those who, like Tracey Emin, base their art on their own lives. No wonder there's not enough truth to go round.

Sometimes it all seems to me like pre-millennial hysteria, a collective desire to confess and be confessed to, to act out a modern version of Revelation, just in case the worst happens and the millennium really does mean Armageddon. Then I get a grip, tell myself to calm down, and think about it all some more.

Oddly, a pointer towards the reasons for our predilection for the plain unvarnished appears in Hanif Kureishi's *Intimacy*. Jay is reminding about his first days at university. 'Philosophy was formal, abstract, cool. I chose it because I loved literature, and didn't want stories that had been poisoned by theorising. For me that was like food that had been chewed by other people.'

Jay's worry is about literary theory spoiling his personal experience of literature. Ours appears broader: a worry about the things we are told being mediated, spun, angled, loaded. If we deal only in the truth, we imagine, then we can be certain

of what we see, read and hear. But that's not right at all, as these latest works of Hanif Kureishi attest.

His fiction has always been autobiographical, but while in the past he has explored race, class, sexuality, his new work is, if you will, far more intimate. Had he, like so many other writers nowadays, gone straight for memoir in his explorations of his wantonly broken family, all we would have learned is that Hanif Kureishi is not an admirable man. With that, he and his writings could have been dismissed.

But instead there is much more to be gleaned from these new pieces of writing, about why men do the things they do to their children, and the mothers of their children, and what it is they think they are doing to them, and for themselves. By fictionalising the truth, Kureishi distances himself from it and makes it not particular but general.

Which is why, while truth will always be stranger than fiction, fiction will always be the medium best placed to furnish us with universal truths. And it is the latter that we have lost sight of in our quest for factual detail. When it comes to verity, we've already had far too much of a good thing.

RIGHT OF REPLY

DOUGLAS PARR



The campaign director of Greenpeace replies to Charles Arthur's article on genetically engineered food.

AT LAST, issues with a scientific background have landed where they belong - in the political arena. The issues that confront us with genetically engineered (GE) food are, at root, political. They are issues of power and control over new technologies and the nature of future agricultural policy. Sadly, the Government pretends these can be dealt with by scientific committees examining the minutiae of gene insertion.

With all these questions about GE food and crop safety, has anyone looked at the alternative? In terms of what consumers want and environmental impact there's one winner - organic food. A paper in *Nature* magazine last year showed that yields of soya and maize were the same from organic agriculture as they were from intensive conventional farming. Why then does Britain have one of the lowest rates of organic agriculture in Europe?

None of this is to say that the science is unimportant - far from it, it is essential. But there are limits to what science can tell us. In this, just as any other argument, you have to look at what values you bring to the (dinner) table. Science cannot answer the political and societal questions: Are gene-foods and crops necessary? What are the alternatives? How fair is it that the British public take the risks and the benefits go to an American multinational?

What is acceptable risk? (and there are risks - as even Monsanto's chief executive accepts). If you examine these questions, you may well conclude that we should ban GE food and crops. But coherent answers are conspicuously lacking from government. Tony Blair complains he is frustrated about the debate. Frankly, so are we. Greenpeace has been campaigning on this issue for 10 years now.

A ride on Darwin's bandwagon

IN THE Twenties, the noted Harvard physiologist W.J. Crozier warned his students against abandoning 'proper' biological disciplines such as physiology and anatomy for the attractions of a 'soft' subject such as evolution. 'Evolution', he told them, 'is a good topic for the Sunday supplements of newspapers, but it isn't science.'

Seventy years on, few would dispute that evolutionary biology is now a 'proper' science. As the great biologist Theodosius Dobzhansky put it, 'Nothing in biology makes sense except in the light of evolution'. In recent years many evolutionary biologists have tried to stretch Dobzhansky's axiom even further, claiming that not just in biology but also in the social sciences, nothing makes sense except in evolution's light. The paradox, though, is that the more Darwinism seems to explain about human behaviour, the



WEDNESDAY BOOK

DARWIN'S SPECTRE: EVOLUTIONARY BIOLOGY IN THE MODERN WORLD

BY MICHAEL R. ROSE, PRINCETON UNIVERSITY PRESS, £18.95

more that Darwinists write as if for Sunday supplements, abandoning scientific facts for speculative theories and flights of fancy.

This paradox is well expressed by *Darwin's Spectre*. Michael Rose, an expert on the biology of ageing, wants to reveal the universal importance of Darwinism. His book is divided into three sections. The first explores some of the key conceptual issues related to Darwinian theory (such as selection, adaptation and variation) while the second deals with applic-

ations of Darwinian theory (agriculture, medicine and eugenics). In both cases, the discussion is placed in a historical context. Rose provides, for instance, a potted biography of Darwin and a brief history of racial science.

You would be well advised to skip all this. The biology here will be familiar to anyone who has read authors such as Richard Dawkins, Steven Pinker and Randolph Nesse, while some of the history is distinctly dodgy. Any writer who admits that one of his key historical sources is Paul Johnson's *The Birth of the Modern World* does little to generate confidence.

The real interest of the book lies in the third section, in which Rose enters the debate about human nature. Rose wants to challenge traditional Darwinian explanations of human nature - such as evolutionary psychology - but from a Darwinian viewpoint. Evolutionary psychology holds that much of human behaviour has been shaped by natural selection, chosen because such behaviours helped our Stone Age ancestors the better to survive and reproduce.

Such a view, Rose observes, does not capture the key aspect of human behaviour - its 'spectacular flexibility'. Rose proposes a new theory, which he dubs 'immanent Darwinism'. All human behaviour, he argues, is implicitly Darwinian not because we have specific behaviours shaped by natural selection, but because human beings constantly calculate the best ways of passing on their genes. 'On this model', he writes, 'behaviour is determined by an immanent process

of calculation taking place in the brain, not by genetic evolution arising from natural selection.'

Rose accepts that 'we don't experience our mental processes as having Darwinian ends'. Rather, the Darwinian calculations that underlie our behaviour are subconscious. According to Rose, we all possess a 'dynamic unconscious analogous to Freud's super-ego', except that it is driven by a 'Darwinian calculus'. The neural mechanism that calculates Darwinian odds, he suggests, is located in the brain's frontal lobes. 'Our subjective experiences and calculations', Rose writes, 'would be like dogs on a leash, the leash held by a Darwinian master of whom we are not normally aware.'

This is all good fun, as Rose constantly jumps from one extravagant speculation to the next. The trouble is that speculation is rarely leavened by empirical facts. As Rose himself admits, 'this type of theory patently invites incredulity' and is 'such an extravagant hypothesis' that it makes evolutionary psychology 'attractive by contrast'. Rose's theory jettisons the best aspects of evolutionary psychology - its ability to explain some human traits, such as language - while retaining its more dubious aspects, including the tendency to wild speculation and the attempt to explain all human behaviour in terms of reproductive fitness.

Ultimately, Rose's vision of human nature derives not from science but from political ideology. The contrast between evolutionary psychology and immanent Darwinism corresponds, he believes, to the debate between Keynesianism and monetarism. Just like Keynesians, evolutionary psychologists have abandoned a libertarian view of human nature. According to evolutionary psychology 'the behaviour of humans as producers, consumers, or intermediaries will be



Charles Darwin, the inspiration of many a Sunday supplement UPP

defined by specific behavioural mechanisms established by genetic adaptation.'

With immanent Darwinism, however, 'the economy becomes a kind of *mélée*, barely held together by institutional frameworks, with congeries of Darwinian fiefs struggling for advantage.' Socialism, he adds, 'would be compatible with the evolutionary psychology system', while with immanent Darwinism 'there can be no peace for the social engineers'. This is an argument that defies any kind of rational response. It's good Sunday-supplement stuff. But is it science?

KENAN MALIK

The reviewer's book *The Meaning of Race* is published by Macmillan Press

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WEDNESDAY POEM

NIGHT THOUGHTS AT TUNG-LIN MONASTERY ON LU MOUNTAIN
BY LI PO (AD701-762). TRANSLATED BY DAVID HINTON

Alone, searching for blue-lotus roots,
I set out from city gates. Soon, frost

clear, Tung-lin temple bells call out.
Hu Creek's moon bright in pale water.

Heaven's fragrance everywhere pure
emptiness, heaven's music endless.

I sit silent. It's still, the entire Buddha-
realm in a hair's breadth, mind-depths

All bottomless clarity, in which vast
kalpas begin and end out of nowhere.

This poem comes from David Hinton's translation of 'The Selected Poems of Li Po', published by Anvil Press (£9.95)

John Ehrlichman

A QUARTER of a century ago, Washington was swept up in an impeachment drama far more gripping than the sorry and sordid saga which has unfolded over the last 12 months. The President of course was Richard Nixon, who was forced to resign. The crime was not the concealment of a legal sexual affair, but high conspiracy, perversion of justice and the misuse of the highest offices and agencies of American government. And a central figure in proceedings was John D. Ehrlichman, Nixon's domestic affairs adviser, confidant and fellow plotter.

Together with Bob Haldeman, the President's chief of staff, he formed what the press dubbed the "Berlin Wall" or "Prussian Guard", sealing off a frequently paranoid President from a world which all three believed was irredeemably biased against them. Ehrlichman had met Haldeman as a student at the University of California after he left the air force in 1945, and the friendship would lead him to the White House.

Their Germanic surnames were matched by the celebrated Teutonic virtues of thoroughness, organisation, loyalty and obedience of orders. They were qualities which made Ehrlichman a formidable manager of Nixon's White House campaigns in 1960 and 1968 (as well as of the ill-fated attempt to win the California governorship in 1962), and later a highly effective bureaucrat. But they proved disastrous in the scandal called Watergate, with which Ehrlichman's name will forever be associated.

Watergate grew directly from the 1972 Nixon re-election campaign, in which the President and his aides would leave no stone, legal or illegal, unturned to win a second term in the White House. Hence the "dirty tricks", and hence the notorious "Plumbers Unit" which reported ultimately to Ehrlichman and Haldeman. The seeds of Ehrlichman's downfall were sown as early as March 1969, two months after Nixon took office, when he set

up an in-house "intelligence capability" to provide "investigative support" for the White House.

The plumbers were thus loosed upon the land. Their most infamous deed, which Ehrlichman late described as "the seminal Watergate episode", was the September 1971 break-in at the California office of the psychiatrist of Daniel Ellsberg, who two months earlier had leaked to *The New York Times* the government's secret history of the Vietnam war, known as the "Pentagon Papers". Ehrlichman - whose name in Ger-

"If I had any advice for my kids, it would be never, never, never, to defer your moral judgements to anybody: your parents, your wife, anybody"

man means "honest man" - had broadly authorised the operation and in 1974 would be tried and convicted for the crime. Before that, however, came Watergate.

Officially the plumbers had been disbanded in early 1972, but in practice they continued to operate - with the most fateful results. On the night of 17 June 1972, five of them were arrested at the Watergate Building in downtown Washington, attempting to place listening devices in the headquarters of the Democratic National Committee. A "third-rate burglary" was about to become America's worst political scandal of the century.

From the outset it was obvious the five were linked to the White House. Soon it would transpire that they were effectively controlled by the splendidly titled "Creep", the Committee to Re-elect the President. As the finger of suspicion pointed ever higher, Nixon was forced on 30 April 1973 to sacrifice his closest aides, requesting the resignation of both Ehrlichman and Haldeman and sacking the White House counsel John Dean. But it was too late. In August 1974 he would be forced to resign himself, after the House of Representatives had voted two articles of impeachment, and his support in the Senate, even among Republicans, collapsed.

By then Ehrlichman was mired in criminal proceedings, and on 1 January 1975 he, Haldeman and the former attorney-general John Mitchell were convicted of conspiracy, perjury and obstruction of justice. Ehrlichman would serve 18 months in jail. "It is a tragedy," Nixon would later write, "that John Ehrlichman went to prison, while Daniel Ellsberg walked free." In his own 1982 memoir, *Witness to Power*, Ehrlichman himself offered a more downbeat assessment. "I don't miss Richard Nixon very much, and Richard Nixon probably doesn't miss me." But, as the famous Oval Office tapes show, the two were as close as could be in the pursuit and maintenance of power.

The real tragedy perhaps was that, when he was not plotting dastardly deeds, John Ehrlichman could be an admirable government official. Take Theodore White, no Nixon-lover, writing in *The Making of the President* (1972) about Ehrlichman: "His shop was one of the few at the White House where ideas were seriously entertained - good ideas too, on land-use policy, on urbanisation and preservation of the American environment." Alas, he will be remembered not for any initiative of domestic policy, but for a couple of phrases which have entered the language of politics the world over:



Ehrlichman served 18 months in jail for his involvement in the Watergate scandal

One was his suggestion to Nixon, caught on the tapes, that Patrick Gray, the hapless acting director of the FBI, be left "twisting slowly, slowly, in the wind". On another occasion he advised Nixon, in measuring the consequences of some initiative, to see "how it plays in Peoria".

Probably Ehrlichman was not so much dishonest, as a man convinced that his supreme duty was to serve the President, whatever it took. He conceded as much in 1977, remarking that he had brought his troubles on himself. "If I had any advice for my kids, it would be never, never, never, to defer your moral

judgements to anybody: your parents, your wife, anybody."

After his release from jail, a new Ehrlichman emerged. Disbarred from returning to the law he had practised in Seattle before joining the White House, he remarried and settled in Santa Fe, New Mexico. The flint-faced White House enforcer had turned into a bearded and affable radio commentator and occasional television pundit. He also wrote books, publishing not only *Witness to Power*, but four novels about Washington politics. Finally, he moved to Atlanta where he served as vice-president of Law Interna-

tional, an engineering consultancy specialising in the handling of hazardous waste.

RUPERT CORNWELL

John Daniel Ehrlichman, lawyer, government official and novelist: born Tacoma, Washington 20 March 1925; counsel to President Richard Nixon 1968-69; Assistant to the President for Domestic Affairs 1969-73; married 1949 Jeanne Fisher (three sons, two daughters; marriage dissolved); 1978 Christine McLaurine (one son; marriage dissolved); 1991 Karen Hilliard; died Atlanta, Georgia 14 February 1999.

Billy Houlston

IN THE beautiful late November and early December days of 1963, there was a by-election in the Dumfriesshire constituency. At lunchtime, it was the wont of Labour Party canvassers to repair to Billy's Bar in Dumfries High Street. Our host "Basher", was a genial, five foot eleven, immensely broad-shouldered man, a veritable Belted Galloway hulk, with twinkling kind eyes, from whom physical power and good nature exuded.

Heaven knows what his politics were, he never let on. But the conversation was not about politics but football and his reminiscences. Our host was Billy "Basher" Houlston, a living legend in those parts, the only man ever to have gained full international caps for Scotland playing for Queen of the South, the venerable, if unashamed, Dumfries football club. Houlston had been one of my boyhood heroes - and a hero to tens of thousands of other Scottish boys. He was the centre-forward in that pantheon of 1949 Wembley wizards who astonished and unexpectedly beat an England team 3-1, where the forward line read Matthews, Mortenson, Milburn, Pearson and Finney, not to mention Frank Swift in goal and the captain Billy Wright.

Houlston more than held his own that day against Neil Franklin of Stoke City, arguably the most commanding centre-half ever to don an England shirt. Like his predecessor, Jock Dodds (Blackpool), Houlston was like a tank, a marvellous asset half a century ago, when balls were leather, heavy and held together by laces. Centre-forwards had to be tough and "Basher", or "Rumble-them-up", as he was known, certainly was.

Houlston's father was a gardener at the Crichton Royal mental hospital, a superb set of red sandstone buildings recently created an outpost of Glasgow University. On leaving Brownhall School, Houlston became a male nurse in the Crichton and first came to notice as the thrusting centre-forward of the hospital eleven.

Whisked away to Arbroath to serve the Second World War in RAF Coastal Command as a gunner operator, Houlston developed his skills with the Arbroath club. On his return home in 1945, he joined his local team, Queen of the South, for whom he was to score 67 goals in 154 First Division appearances.

I first saw him at Tynecastle Park against Hearts, when he quickly became the opponent we loved to hate - a role he relished. My memory of him is at Hampden Park against Ireland in 1949 when he scored twice in a 3-2 victory. His flying header from a cross from Willie Waddell, later manager of Glasgow Rangers, in the dying seconds was one of the best goals ever seen at the Glasgow ground.

The highlight of Houlston's footballing career came on 9 April 1949 at Wembley. Under blue skies and on an exquisite stretch of turf, Scotland, surviving a fearful crisis in the game's opening passages, stormed their way by three goals to one to gain the international championship and inflict on England their first defeat in the tournament since the war. The Association Football correspondent of the Press Association wrote: "When Houlston prepared to take a throw-in down the Scottish left wing, the second phase was about to begin. Scotland, still now in attack, had been reduced largely to a series of long passes down the centre where, in spite of Houlston's liveliness, Franklin was in complete command but now, in their second real advance, Scotland snatched the lead after 29 minutes. Steel took Houlston's throw, gave Reilly a clever pass behind Aston and there was Mason up to stab the winger square centre beyond Swift on to the far post and into the net."

Alas, while Scotland were touring that summer in the United States, Houlston injured his ankle, and was never the same player again. After spells with Berwick Rangers and Third Lanark he hung up his boots and returned to Dumfries. Lord

Donald Allan Dunstan, politician: born Suva, Fiji 21 September 1926; married 1949 Gretel Ellis (two sons, one daughter; marriage dissolved); 1976 Adele Koh (died 1978); died Adelaide, South Australia 6 February 1999.



"Rumble-them-up"

Monro of Langholm, as Sir Hector Monro his MP from 1964 till 1997, remembers him as "a great scout. As owner of both the Nith Hotel at Glencaple and the Embassy Hotel in Dumfries he was immensely popular." He could say that he never played in a losing Scotland side.

TAM DALYELL

William Houlston, nurse, footballer and publican: born Macmillan, Dumfriesshire 4 April 1921; married 1949 Betty Jamieson (two sons); died Dumfries 10 February 1999.

Don Dunstan

DON DUNSTAN made more of an impact on Australia than almost any other state political leader. State politics are usually mundane affairs, overshadowed by the federal scene in Canberra. But when Dunstan ruled as premier of the Labor government in South Australia from 1970 to 1979, the "Dunstan decade" put that state on the map with a series of groundbreaking social reforms. His was the first government in Australia to introduce land rights for Aborigines, decriminalise homosexual acts, appoint a woman judge and introduce anti-discrimination legislation.

Dunstan was a man of vision, a nonconformist who had the courage to be himself in one of the country's most conservative political environments. The most abiding image of Dunstan is on the day he turned up for work in 1972 at Parliament House in Adelaide wearing pink shorts. He had them made, telling his tailor not to produce bloomers down to the knee but to cut them "short". Dunstan was making a statement, but it shocked many people in the "city of churches", as Adelaide was known, and even he admitted years later that he might have gone too far.

It was a shrewd political move than the headlines made it seem. It made people outside South Australia take notice of the man who was setting out to shake his state out of its provincial somnolence and to turn Adelaide into the

"Athens of the south", as Dunstan rather grandly put it.

He dismissed those who suggested he was a man in the wrong place. Despite his conservatism, South Australia has something of a radical tradition. In 1894 it was the first state in Australia, and one of the first in the world, to give votes to women. Dunstan saw himself as a man in that tradition. "This is my place," he said in his last television interview, shown the night he died.

Dunstan was born in Fiji, where his South Australian father was a merchant. He went to St Peter's College, one of Adelaide's leading private schools, and to the University of Adelaide, where he moved in the theatrical circles and graduated in law. This background cast him outside the traditional working-class mould of the Labor Party at the time he joined it. He stood for state parliament at the age of 26 and won the Adelaide constituency of Norwood, a stronghold of the conservative Liberal Country League (LCL), in 1953.

The LCL ruled South Australia from 1933 until Labor unseated it in 1965. The conservatives stayed in power for these 32 unbroken years through a blatant gerrymander of the electoral boundaries that gave undue weight to their base in sparsely populated country seats. Dunstan made reform of this his priority. He had already shown his credentials as a reformer at the Labor Party's 1965 national conference when he successfully pushed through a motion to drop the racially discrimina-



Pink shorts in parliament

tory White Australia immigration policy from its platform.

In South Australia, Dunstan had a brief stint as premier when he took over the Labor Party leadership in 1967. His government lost office after an election the following year produced a hung parliament. Under-reformed and fairer electoral boundaries, Dunstan led Labor back to power in 1970, and the Dunstan decade began.

"We'll set a standard of social advancement that the whole of Australia will envy," he declared. "We believe South Australia can set the pace." He was right. Elsewhere, Australian public life was still gripped by conservatism. Dunstan came to power two years

before the reforming Labor government of Gough Whitlam took office in Canberra.

His changes embraced not just personal freedoms, but the education system, urban planning and consumer protection. He appointed the first Aboriginal, Sir Douglas Nicholls, to the vice-regal office of state governor. And he turned Adelaide into a national centre for the performing arts by building a state theatre centre and fostering cultural enterprises. People such as Rudolf Nureyev and Lord Snowdon visited the Adelaide artistic salon revolving around Dunstan and his second wife, Adele Koh.

Dunstan was the first political leader in Australia to understand and use the media as a marketing tool for his own message. When a clairvoyant once predicted that Adelaide would be swamped by a tidal wave, Dunstan went to Glenelg Beach on the appointed day to mix with anxious crowds. He walked through Adelaide streets with a loudspeaker, appealing for calm to depositors gathered outside a building society said to be in trouble. He published his own cook book, and talked up the wines from South Australia's now world famous vineyards. At one point, Dunstan's approval rating soared to 83 per cent. Radio stations played a song called "Our Don Dunstan", fashioned after one about another prominent South Australian, "Our Don Bradman".

How Dunstan brought such a revolution to a society once identi-

fied by its WASPish establishment remains one of the spectacular success stories of Australian politics. The key, perhaps, was his unadorned style. Dunstan could communicate with those less educated and articulate and make them feel included, a rare skill in leaders. Although he was more radical than the party he led, he never forgot, as he told one newspaper, that he had to carry the party with him. Even conservative South Australians admired him in the end, and got swept along in their state's new image. Then it all came unstuck.

In 1978 Dunstan sacked Harold Salisbury, the state police commissioner, after discovering that the police special branch had kept thousands of secret files on public figures. A political storm ensued: a later inquiry vindicated Dunstan's action. But the affair shook his government. Later that year his wife, still in her thirties, died from cancer. Dunstan was deeply distressed, appeared to suffer a breakdown and shocked everyone when he resigned in early 1979, appearing before the media in his dressing gown in hospital. It was a sad end. Des Corcoran, who took over as leader, called an election later that year at which Labor was decimated. The Dunstan decade was over.

After his health recovered, Dunstan left his beloved South Australia and went to work for the tourist commission in the neighbouring state of Victoria. He publicly supported causes on human and

minority rights. After two military coups in Fiji in 1987, he became president of the Movement for Democracy in Fiji. He continued to court controversy, such as when he launched a book on homosexuality on a platform with a man dressed as a nun who called himself Monsignor Porcamadonna. Italian community leaders were furious.

Despite his flamboyance, Dunstan was a reserved, even shy man. In later years, journalists tried to draw him on his personal life, and the subject of sexuality, but he refused to the last interview, arguing that public figures were entitled to private lives. He returned to Adelaide and opened a restaurant called Don's Table with his partner, Stephen Cheng. Last year, as cancer started to take its toll, he drew an audience of 5,000 to the Gough Whitlam Lecture in Adelaide at which he denounced New Labor's embrace of free market economics.

Don Dunstan was an old-style interventionist, and one of his great legacies is the city of Adelaide itself. He left it with a sense of pride in its heritage, innovation in the arts and elegance in the good things of life like food and drink.

ROBERT MILLIKEN

Donald Allan Dunstan, politician: born Suva, Fiji 21 September 1926; married 1949 Gretel Ellis (two sons, one daughter; marriage dissolved); 1976 Adele Koh (died 1978); died Adelaide, South Australia 6 February 1999.

Sir James Hill



Southampton ties

SOUTHAMPTON TEST, which James Hill represented for more than 20 years, is one of Britain's super-marginal constituencies. It has changed hands six times since 1955 and has seen even political stars such as Shirley Williams come and leave defeated. Hill, however, was a consistent winner. He was elected in 1970, and hung on until the second Wilson election in 1974. He came back in 1979, however, and held it until the Blair landslide in 1997. For Hill, though, the previous election in 1992 was a close thing. He got back - but by just 585 votes. It was almost the same number as the majority by which he lost the seat in 1974.

If no candidate is worth more than a few hundred votes, then Hill's background provided just the right

number in 1992. Few candidates have had such local ties.

As the son of a Southampton-based merchant navy officer, he was educated at the Regent's Park School in the Test constituency and later at Southampton University. During the Second World War he sailed from the port in the Royal Fleet Auxiliaries as a signals officer not out of his teens. Later he flew in BOAC flying boats from Southampton Marine Airport. Even the name of the aircraft was local. They were Solents. He was also a prominent member of Southampton City Council, serving as chairman of the housing committee from 1967 to 1970.

In the Commons he never forgot that he had a marginal seat. His maiden speech was devoted to

Southampton's housing blight and he maintained his reputation as a constituency-oriented MP by attacks on his city's vandals, kerb crawlers and red-light areas. Although he was an instinctive privatiser, there was one exception to his robust Thatcherism. He was against any form of privatisation of the Ordnance Survey, a big Southampton employer.

But he was not merely a parish-pump politician. He was a delegate to the European Assembly where he played a significant part on several key committees. Although an early European enthusiast - he addressed 70 meetings during the 1975 referendum campaign - he became gradually more sceptical, announcing in the mid-Eighties: "The Common

Agricultural Policy is the root of all the troubles in Europe today."

He was an easily recognisable figure in the House, burly and thick-speckled, sitting on the front bench below the gangway. He was popular with his colleagues and secretary of their Industry Committee. He served on the select committees on European legislation, transport and procedure and was chairman of the Commons committee on housing improvements. And, as an airman who held pilot's, navigator's and radio officer's licences, he was a natural choice to be secretary of the Parliamentary Flying Club.

In 1997, the year after he was knighted, not even Hill's local roots and long constituency service could save him. He had been undecided

about standing again but in the end he was persuaded to run. He lost by nearly 14,000 votes. At last Test was no longer a marginal. But the result was not due entirely to the Labour landslide. There had been significant boundary changes which had tilted Test decisively towards Labour.

TERENCE LANCASTER

Stanley James Allen Hill, politician: born Southampton 21 December 1926; member, Southampton City Council 1966-70, 1976-79, Chairman of Housing 1967-70, 1976-79; MP (Conservative) for Southampton Test 1970-74, 1979-97; KT 1996; married 1958 Ruby Ralph (two sons, three daughters); died Southampton 16 February 1999.



Pritchard, far right, with the Fortunes. When their hits dried up, 'We were like wet fish on a slab,' he said

Redferns

Barry Pritchard

IN 1963, in Birmingham, the guitarist and vocalist Barry Pritchard formed a group called the Fortunes with Glen Dale and Rod Allen, and they were signed by the eccentric promoter Reg Calvert. Pritchard recalled the first bookings: "Reg held competitions and, if people shouted a number that we couldn't do, he would pay them half-a-crown. It was no big deal. There might be 20 people shouting out, so Reg would pick out numbers that we knew."

The Fortunes, as a five-piece with David Carr and Andy Brown, were signed to Decca, and their first single, "I Love Her Still" (1963), was written by Pritchard. Their second, the song-writer Tony Hiller's infuriatingly catchy "Caroline" (1964), became the theme music for the pirate radio station Radio Caroline, and was a European hit. The Fortunes stood out from other 1960s beat groups because of their distinctive four-part harmonies. "Barry Pritchard had the high voice," says Tony Hiller, "and he was sensational."

His high notes really made 'Caroline' work for me."

The Fortunes recorded two numbers for a live album from the Cavern club in Liverpool (1964), but their subsequent singles failed to sell. The record producer Noel Walker remembers: "The Fortunes' contract came up for renewal and Decca didn't want to renew it. I had recorded them at the Cavern and I told Decca that they sung wonderfully and deserved another chance. I wanted to use them as singers backed by professional musicians and I found a beautiful song, 'You've Got Your Troubles'. The record turned out exactly how I wanted and I regard Barry's harmonies as fundamental to the Fortunes' sound."

"You've Got Your Troubles" (1965) climbed to No 2 in Britain and No 7 in the United States, but the Fortunes bravely admitted that they had not played their own instruments on the record. As with the Monkees and Love Affair, the public became suspicious of their abilities. However, they played well in concert, where their hit song was

stripped of its middle-of-the-road arrangement. And, as the songwriter Roger Greenaway says, "There are 160 versions of 'You've Got Your Troubles', but the Fortunes' is very much the best."

Their follow-up single, "Here It Comes Again" (1965), despite its similarities to "You've Got Your Troubles", was an international hit, and "This Golden Ring" (1966) was also successful. Then the hits stopped. Noel Walker recalls: "Barry was the most outgoing of the Fortunes and was a calming influence when things went wrong. He took the ups and downs much better than the rest." The Fortunes released some fine singles - "The Idol" (1967), "Seasons in the Sun" (1968) and "Loving Cup" (1968) - but they didn't sell. "We were like wet fish on a slab," said Pritchard, "and it took us some years to get back."

The comeback finally came with a cover version of Pickettywitch's "That Same Old Feeling" for the American market. It was followed by "Here Comes That Rainy Day Feeling Again", which

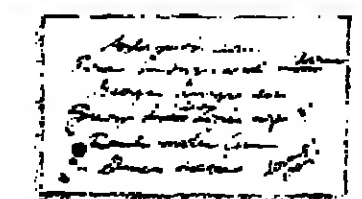
made the US Top Twenty in 1971. Then came two Top Ten hits in Britain - the reggae-influenced "Freedom Come Freedom Go" (1971) and "Storm in a Teacup" (1972, written by Lynsey De Paul). In 1984 the Fortunes were part of the successful double album *Hooked On Number Ones*, but by then they were resigned to cabaret dates and oldies shows. Pritchard, who was not a large man, had to endure Rod Allen calling him "a small fortune" on stage every night.

In 1995, suffering from heart trouble, Pritchard was forced to leave the group. He and his family opened a bar and restaurant on the Costa del Sol.

The Fortunes are about to embark on a nationwide tour with Gerry and the Pacemakers, but Rod Allen is the only remaining original member.

SPENCER LEIGH

Barry Pritchard, singer and guitarist: born Birmingham 3 April 1944; twice married (four sons); died Swindon, Wiltshire 11 January 1999.



LITERARY NOTES CEDRIC CULLINGFORD

Principle and pathology in the political novel

THE GAME of politics is for many a fascinating one in its own right, with its insistence on personal power and the necessity of knowing the right people. Whether dealing with the "Sir Humphreys" of this world or working through spin doctors, there is no escaping from the fact that politics is in many ways not anything in the way of an exemplar of virtue but a good illustration of the pathology of human nature.

The best, or most lasting, of political novels accept this and use politics as a means of gaining insight into the private lives and motivations of individuals. Trollope's *Palliser* novels, from *Can You Forgive Her* in 1847 to *The Duke's Children* in 1880, represent the tradition of looking at the effects of relationships, families, private alliances and networking on personal success. They centre on an upper-class family who are deeply conservative and suspicious of social reform. They depict the earlier approach to politics that meant that aristocratic families would be caught up in loyalty to one party or another, not out of class or conviction but out of tradition.

The politicians that Trollope depicts, Phineas Finn apart, are generally driven by pure motivation. They have chosen to enter politics not necessarily to make money but to do good. What

marks out Mrs Humphry Ward's neglected political novels of the early years of this century is their assumption that the same aristocratic families involved in politics see it almost wholly as a game. Both in terms of personal behaviour and motivation, the Edwardian society she depicts is more decadent and self-indulgent. The decay of the political world is reflected in a parallel corruption of marriage.

One of the interesting examples of Mrs Ward's analysis of the intermingling of the private with the public side of politics is *Eltham House*. Based on an examination of how society in her own day would have viewed the marriage of Lord and Lady Holland who were such a social success in the Regency, despite the fact that Lord Holland's wife was divorced, it is an analysis of the pressures of social hypocrisy and personal ambition. Alec Wing's desire to buy his way into politics is thwarted by personal enmity; morality is merely a device his enemies use.

Eltham House is a book not about political ideas but about the way in which people use them for their own ends. Mrs Ward reveals a society in which ideas have no strong hold, but are a matter of routine, family or prejudice. Alec Wing is typical in pursuing both the game of politics and the game of social success, and

it is clear that to Mrs Ward the two belong together.

The difference between the "idea" and the use to which it is put emerges clearly in the very structure of *The Cornet's Family*. On the surface the book is about property, primogeniture and the political world. But there is a clever juxtaposition between the ideas and the plot, the reader looks the more critically because any natural sympathy is deliberately taken from him.

The elder son, Lord Corsston, is a socialist who does not believe in primogeniture, yet he is fighting to possess his estates. The Dowager Lady Corsston, reactionary and self-centred, struggles to prevent him coming into his own as head of the family. This battle, watched by the bewildered relations, fawning, lazy and inept, is seen to be not about principle but control, not about ideas but self-indulgence. Mrs Ward's concern is with the nature of such a society and the influence on it of personal will and gossip.

Real politics, for novelists, is about people. The view that Mrs Humphry Ward takes, unlike Trollope, strikes a contemporary note, and is essentially bleak. The novels remain relevant as well as worth reading.

Cedric Cullingford is the author of 'Children's Literature and its Effects' (Cassell, £15.99)

Robert Barr

IN PRAISING Robert Barr's storytelling skills (5 February), Leonard Miall concentrated on his subject's fame as a television rather than a radio drama innovator, and creator in part of such huge popular and critical successes as *Z-Cors* (watched at one stage by virtually the entire television-owning population), *Softly Softly*, and the *Spycatcher* series, writes Jack Adrian.

Yet, although Barr defected to the junior medium almost as soon as it re-emerged from wartime cold storage, in 1946, he not only retained an affection for radio, but over the years enjoyed a kind of "dual nationality", writing prolifically for both. Indeed, it may be that he was even more of an innovator than is realised, since although his adapta-

tions from Li-Col Oreste Pinto's best-selling *Spycatcher* books first appeared on the small screen (1953 to 1961), he quickly rewrote the half-hour plays for the wireless (even retaining the actor Bernard Archard as Pinto), so that *Spycatcher* may well be the very first time a popular television drama series became a radio spin-off.

His successes as a writer for radio may not be buried into the national consciousness to the same extent as, say, *Softly Softly* (the odd surviving episode always good for Sixties' celebration nights on BBC2, or to be used in tandem with earnest lectures at the NFT). But to those who recall the truly great days of radio drama - forget the 1940s or 1950s: the real Golden Age ran roughly from

the mid-1960s through to the mid-1980s - Barr's is a name to cherish.

He wrote at a time when commissioning editors were not hounded by pursed-lipped accountants and a good serial could run for rather more than the miserly four weeks (if you're lucky) accorded it today - his engrossing *And the Walls Came Tumbling Down* (1966) extended to 13. Yet he could screw up the tension in far less time when necessary: in the six-part *The Dark Island* (1969; murder and espionage amongst the remote islands of the Outer Hebrides) he created one of the most memorable thriller serials ever broadcast (with surely one of the most evocative openings: the cries of the gulls, the keen of a single concertina).

He wrote two sequels, then, in the mid-1970s, a couple of serials featuring his quirky investigator Galbraith (*The King of Diamonds* and *The Midas Touch*). In his seventies, when most writers would be yearning to bury the typewriter under a dust-cover, Barr launched a superb series of tough police dramas. *Detective* ("Stories of crime and detection in London"), starring Ray Brooks as a ducking-and-diving CID sergeant at police-work's sharp end. In the end *Detective* ran to three long series as well as a gripping 10-part serial.

Barr was certainly a brilliant writer for television; but his work for the far more imaginative medium should not be forgotten.

Shareholder could also be employee

WHETHER A controlling shareholder of a company could also be an employee of that company for the purposes of the Employment Rights Act 1996 depended on the circumstances of the particular case.

The Court of Appeal dismissed the appeal of the Department of Trade and Industry against a decision of the Employment Appeal Tribunal that the respondent, who was sole shareholder of a company, was entitled as an employee of the company to a redundancy payment under section 166 of the Employment Rights Act 1996.

The respondent became managing director of the company and held the only issued share. It was intended in the future that an American group would hold 80 per cent of the shares in the company, and a draft shareholders' agreement to that effect had been prepared. The respondent signed a contract of employment.

The company became insolvent before the shareholders' agreement was executed. A receiver was appointed and the respondent was dismissed with effect from April 1996. His application to the DTT for a redundancy payment from the National Insurance Fund under section 166 of the Employment Rights Act 1996 was rejected on the ground that he was not an employee.

He applied to an industrial tribunal which concluded that he was an employee of the company, relying on its findings that his status as sole shareholder was only temporary, and that any control which he had had of the group was only theoretical. The tribunal laid stress

WEDNESDAY LAW REPORT 17 FEBRUARY 1999

Secretary of State for Trade and Industry v Bottrill
Court of Appeal (Lord Woolf, Master of the Rolls, Lord Justice Peter Gibson and Lord Justice Mantell)
12 February 1999

on the facts that the respondent had paid National Insurance contributions and tax as if he were an employee, was entitled to sick pay, worked fixed hours and had a contract with the company which was described as a contract of employment.

The Employment Appeal Tribunal upheld the industrial tribunal's determination, and the DTT appealed, submitting, *inter alia*, in reliance on the decision of the EAT in *Buchan and Ivey v Secretary of State for Employment* (1997) IRLR 80, that whatever his position for other purposes, an individual who held the sole or controlling shareholding in a limited company was not to be regarded as an employee for the purposes of the 1996 Act.

Jennifer Eady (the Treasury Solicitor for the DTT; Martyn Barilem (Shulmans, Leeds) for the respondent.

Lord Woolf MR said that whilst there were attractions in having a simple and clear test which would determine whether a shareholder or a

director was an employee for the purposes of the Employment Rights Act 1996, the Act itself did not provide such a test and it was far from obvious what Parliament would have intended the test to be.

There was no justification for departing from the well-established position in the law of employment generally, which was that whether or not an employer or employee relationship existed could only be decided by having regard to all the relevant facts. If an individual had a controlling shareholding that was certainly a fact which was likely to be significant, but was not to be taken as determinative.

In such a case, a tribunal might wish to consider whether there was or had been a genuine contract between the company and the shareholder, and, if the contract was not a sham, whether the contract actually gave rise to an employer/employee relationship; whether there were other directors apart from the shareholder employee, and whether the company's constitution gave the shareholder rights such that he was in reality answerable only to himself and incapable of being dismissed; and whether, if he was a director, he was able under the Articles of Association to vote on matters in which he was personally interested, such as the termination of his contract of employment.

In the present case the industrial tribunal had been entitled to conclude that there was a genuine contractual relationship between the respondent and his company.

KATE O'HANLON
Barrister

GAZETTE

ROYAL ENGAGEMENTS

The Prince of Wales undertakes engagements in Brighton, East Sussex. Prince Edward, Duke of Kent, attends the Award of the Royal Society of Medicine, 104; Mr Bryan Cassidy, MEP 65; Dr Gordon Cook, Honorary Senior Lecturer in Medicine (Infectious Diseases), University College London, 67; Miss Angela Eagle MP, Parliamentary Under-Secretary, Environment, 38; Miss Maria Eagle MP, 38; The Earl of Elgin and Kincardine, 37th Chief of the Name of Bruce, 78; Lord Foot, solicitor and conservationist, 90; Mr Bernie Grant MP, 58; Lord Hoyle, a Lord in Waiting (Government Whip), 69; Mr Barry Humphries, entertainer, 65; Sir Gordon Jones, former chairman, Yorkshire Water, 72; Mr Richard Kennedy, Head Master, Highgate School, 50; Mr Andrew Leigh, General Manager, the Old Vic, 58; Miss Julia McKenzie, actress and singer, 58; General Sir John Mogg, former Deputy Supreme Allied Commander, Europe, 86; Professor Dr Claire Palley, former Principal, St Anne's College,

BIRTHDAYS

Mr Yasser Arafat, Chairman, Palestine National Authority, 70; Mr Alan Bates, actor, 65; Dr Julia Browne Kuschbach, former Editor, *Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine*, 104; Mr Bryan Cassidy, MEP 65; Dr Gordon Cook, Honorary Senior Lecturer in Medicine (Infectious Diseases), University College London, 67; Miss Angela Eagle MP, Parliamentary Under-Secretary, Environment, 38; Miss Maria Eagle MP, 38; The Earl of Elgin and Kincardine, 37th Chief of the Name of Bruce, 78; Lord Foot, solicitor and conservationist, 90; Mr Bernie Grant MP, 58; Lord Hoyle, a Lord in Waiting (Government Whip), 69; Mr Barry Humphries, entertainer, 65; Sir Gordon Jones, former chairman, Yorkshire Water, 72; Mr Richard Kennedy, Head Master, Highgate School, 50; Mr Andrew Leigh, General Manager, the Old Vic, 58; Miss Julia McKenzie, actress and singer, 58; General Sir John Mogg, former Deputy Supreme Allied Commander, Europe, 86; Professor Dr Claire Palley, former Principal, St Anne's College,

Oxford, 68; Mr Gene Pitney, country and western singer and composer, 58; Baroness Rendell of Babergh (Ruth Rendell), crime novelist, 69; Miss Patricia Routledge, actress, 70; Lord Slyn of Badley, a Lord of Appeal in Ordinary, 69; Mr Graham Stringer MP, 49; Commandant Mary Talbot, former Director, WRNS, 77; Sir Anthony Wilson, former head of the Government Accountancy Service, 71.

ANNIVERSARIES

Births: Sir Edward German (Edward German Jones), composer, 1862; Ronald Arbuthnot Knox, theologian and essayist, 1888. Deaths: Tamerlane the Great, Mongol leader, 1405; Molière (Jean-Baptiste Poquelin), playwright, 1673; Geronimo (Goyathlay - "One Who Yawns"), Apache chief, 1909; Graham Vivian Sutherland, painter, 1980; Lee Strasberg, actor and founder of the Actors' Studio, 1982. On this day: the inner tomb of Tutankhamun was opened at Luxor by the team led by Lord Carnarvon, 1923; the British National Health Service White Paper was issued, 1944; a majority in the House

of Commons decided that Britain should join the Common Market, 1972. Today is Ash Wednesday and the Feast Day of St Evermod, St Finao of Clonsheagh, St Loman, the Seven Servite Founders and Saints Theodulus and Julian.

LECTURES

National Gallery: Rebecca Lyons, "Ingres (1781-1867): Contemporary", 1pm. Victoria and Albert Museum: Gracia Lafuente, "Contemporary Issues in Photography", 2pm. British Museum: Aileen Dawson, "18th-century Porcelain", 11.30am. Robert Gwynne, "Sutton Hoo", 12.30pm. Royal Society of Arts, London WC2: Air Chief Marshal Sir Richard Jones, "Air Power in a New Era", 6pm.

DINNERS

HMS Victory: Admiral Sir John Brigstocke, Second Sea Lord and Commander-in-Chief Naval Home Command, and Lady Brigstocke were the hosts at a dinner held yesterday

evening in HMS Victory, Portsmouth, in aid of the Falkland Islands Memorial Chapel Trust.

British Association for the Club of Rome: Professor Brian Locke was the host at a dinner held yesterday by the British Association for the Club of Rome at the Athenaeum, London SW1. Dr Hans DuMoulin was the speaker.

Coningsby Club: A Coningsby Club dinner was held yesterday evening at the Carlton Club, London SW1. The Hon Francis Maude MP Shadow Chancellor of the Exchequer was the guest of honour and speaker.

SCHOOLS

Hill House: Former pupils and staff of Hill House are invited to a reception on 23 April to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the school's foundation and the 90th birthday of Colonel Townend. Please write to the school, Hill House International Junior School, 17 Hans Place, London SW1X 0EP with your current address and dates at Hill House for full details and an invitation.

HOPE FOR civilisation

recedes with every issue of *The Grocer*. It boasts "exclusive" coverage of the IFF show, where Alf Carr, director-general of the British Frozen Food Federation enthuses: "There is an increase in sophistication of the take-off process with products going into stores and being cooked

WORDS

CHRISTOPHER HAWTREE
bake-off, adj.
and sold there. People always think the main base for frozen lines is the retail cabinet but now there is every sort of product you can think of for bake-off.

Bake-off (not in the OED)

is a bogus process, akin to those pubs which proclaim home-made food but merely heat it up. Carr's testimonials are girding themselves: McCain's bake-off "will set an industry standard over the next few years, they give a home-delivery or pizza-parlour standard".

You ask the questions

(Such as: Gerry Adams, was your decision to join the peace process strategic or moral?)

Gerry Adams, 50, has been president of Sinn Féin since 1983. In 1971 he was interned for suspected terrorist activity. He is now MP for Belfast West, and was an active negotiator for Sinn Féin during the forging of the Good Friday agreement.

Who has been the greatest influence on your life?

Cecile Stewart, Chippenham
There have been so many people... my parents, my grandmother, Colette, Christ, Mairead Farrell, Bobby Sands and many more. It would be wrong to single out a particular individual.

Do you see an end to the punishment beatings?

Helena Jack, Edinburgh
Yes. They should stop immediately. We also need a new policing service and criminal justice system, as well as the involvement of the community.

Until the Police Commission has reported and until we have a proper policing service, we still need to tackle in a non-violent, legal but effective way the problem of antisocial and criminal behaviour. Some elements have sought selfishly to exploit the existing gap in the justice system. One response to this in the last two years has been the formation of a number of community/neighbourhood watch groups. They have significantly improved the quality of life of people living in areas of Belfast like Twinbrook and Poleglass and the Whiterock.

Nor is the problem resolved by vigilantism or by battering young people, some of whom are unfairly categorised as "hoods". The notion of restorative justice is required, in which the community plays a proactive role in reforming and rehabilitating criminals. The community must agree the principles underlying any restorative justice programme.

What is your opinion of Michael Collins: hero or traitor?

Steve Holloway, Nottingham
I don't see people in that context. Everyone has to be judged in their own time, and while I believe that Collins should not have accepted the treaty in the way he did, there were many, many other leaders involved. His death during the Irish civil war was tragic proof of the efficacy of the tactic of divide and conquer which has underwritten Britain's involvement in Ireland.

Have you ever thought of packing it in, and going to live in America and earning a fortune?

Student, University of Ulster
I have never thought of going to live in America, though I would like to visit there and many other places in a more leisurely and more casual - anonymous - way. Nor have I thought of earning a fortune. But I have thought of packing it in...

I live in Warrington and I'm of Northern Irish Catholic descent. I was in Warrington with my young son on the morning of the bomb attack. My relatives in Northern Ireland and myself were deeply affected by the event. Do you think that it was a catalyst in the rapid progress of the peace agreement in the aftermath?

Thomas Conlon, Warrington, Cheshire
The killing of Jonathan Ball and Tim Parry in Warrington, though it was clearly a mistake, was wrong. I know I was deeply moved by the death of the two boys. It is difficult to know exactly how much of a catalyst this particular incident was, because unfortunately there have been many such tragic incidents involving young people killed by either the IRA, the loyalists or the British Crown forces.

The families of the two boys killed at Warrington, like many of the other families of victims, behave with great dignity and courage. I like to think that all of these killings are an incentive for those of us who



John Rush

are committed to building a lasting peace settlement. Unfortunately, and regrettably, the horror of these incidents appears to be forgotten or ignored by some elements. For example - despite the cruelty of last summer, when three little Catholic boys were burned to death in Ballymoney at the height of the Orange marching season - the siege of Carragh Road has continued unabated. And the awfulness of the Omagh bomb seems now to have been forgotten by some elements.

What we all need to do, and this includes the British and the Irish governments, is to ensure that the peace process works, that not a single other person is killed, and that a lasting peace is established.

Which historical figure do you admire most?

John Lister, Cornwall
On a global scale, I am a huge admirer of Nelson Mandela. And in my own life, I like to think that history is made by little people who rarely get mentioned in the history books, but who day in and day out make their own history. In this phase of Irish history, I meet such people every day and they are generally good-humoured, dignified and unassuming as they go about the task of creating a new society. I have huge admiration for these people. Interestingly enough, I find at a community level that most of the most radical and modest activists are women.

Was your decision to join the peace process strategic or moral?

Arne Sheehan
There is a moral imperative to find an alternative to conflict. Irish republicans have always recognised this and Sinn Féin's involvement in the search for a peace strategy sprang from that necessity.

Sinn Féin wants to demolish the physical, psychological and political barriers which divide the people of this island. These owe much to the legacy of our past

and continued British jurisdiction in Ireland, as well as to partition.

The peace process is about tearing down these barriers. It is about creating a new dispensation on this island in the new millennium which raises our common humanity above the prejudices and divisions of our past.

Sinn Féin's political objective is a united Ireland free of British interference. Everything we do is intended to advance that entirely legitimate and realisable goal. We see a 32-county republic as the best way to eradicate the range of political, social, economic and other inequalities which affect the people of this island.

Have you lost friends and relatives in the troubles?

Margaret Collins, Pinner, London
Yes. There have been over 20 members of Sinn Féin killed, and another similar number of family members, many of them personally known to me. My brother-in-law, Patrick Mulvenna, was shot dead by the British Army in 1973. My cousin

Kieran Murphy was mutilated and killed by the Shankill butchers, and in January of last year my nephew-in-law Terry Enright, a young man with two infant children, was killed by loyalists in the killing spree around Christmas. My brother was very seriously injured when shot by the British Army and I also was wounded when a loyalist death squad shot me. Numerous friends have been victims of loyalist and British forces. In my constituency of West Belfast hundreds of people have been killed.

What women's issues do you support?

Jane Clark, London
And which do you oppose?
Equality. In Ireland women are discriminated against in every facet of our society - an experience common throughout the world. It is wrong. It is an intolerable situation and one which must be challenged at every opportunity and changed. Equality is a basic human right and it must be applied and defended.

The issue of what is described as a woman's "right to choose" is an important matter with serious implications for Ireland. Every year in Ireland at least 5,000 Irish women travel to Britain for abortions. While not supportive of abortion on demand, our party policy on this issue recognises a range of social and medical circumstances which can give rise to women having abortions, such as where a woman's mental and physical well-being of life is at risk, or in grave danger.

What books and political events have had the greatest influence on you?

Patrick Fitz, Basingstoke, Hants
I suppose the writings of Alice Walker had a big influence on me in terms of feminism, and *Labour in Irish History* by James Connolly, which is a socialist republican analysis of our history.

On the international stage, the achievement of democracy in South Africa, the re-

unification of Germany, and the collapse of the USSR, are surely indications that no situation is intractable and that everything is possible.

Locally, in my teens in 1964 when the RUC, at the behest of Ian Paisley, smashed into a Sinn Féin election office on the Falls Road and seized the Irish national flag which was displayed there. This event kick-started my sense of political consciousness. Five years later, the pogroms in Belfast which were the reaction to the civil rights struggle here. The seminal event for all republicans of my generation were the hunger strikes of 1980 and 1981 in which 10 prisoners died.

Is the Good Friday agreement more at risk now than it has ever been?

Anon
The onus for delivering and implementing the agreement during this period will be very much on the British Government. The success of the agreement will depend upon Britain establishing the agreed structures so that power can be transferred from London and Dublin within the time-frame outlined, by 10 March. If they fail to do this, which I think most unlikely, then the Unionist veto will have prevailed and the wreckers and rejectionists will have won. We must not allow this to happen. The Good Friday agreement is what we have. It represents what is possible at this time; not the preferred option of any of the participants - certainly not Sinn Féin's.

Who is your favourite comedian?

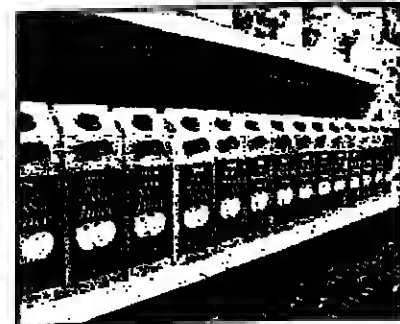
Adrian O'Grady, Ulster
I enjoy John Cleese very much. Patrick Kelly can be funny the odd time. The Hole in the Wall Gang aren't bad. On reflection I probably prefer comedies to comedians.

Can you describe yourself in two sentences?

Judith Mahoney, Strabane
Yes. Tall, bearded and bespectacled.

THE IRRITATIONS OF MODERN LIFE

30. SUPERMARKETS
BY BRUCE MILLAR



I AM at the supermarket. The word "yoghurt" is scrawled on the torn envelope in my hand, so I steer the trolley towards the dairy aisle, a 30-ft expanse of milk-based products. Mission accomplished.

Er, no. There's peach-flavoured yoghurt, strawberry-flavoured yoghurt, yoghurt with peach or strawberry chunks, yoghurt with forest berries (I've never seen berries in a forest), vanilla-flavoured yoghurt, chocolate-flavoured yoghurt, Greek-style with honey, creamy yoghurt with blobs of fruit purée in a separate compartment.

There's low-fat yoghurt and no-fat yoghurt, or rather - since spellings have to vary as much as the contents - lo-fat or life. And just in case you think you've got a handle on the choices involved, there's crème fraîche and fromage blanc.

Out of my depth in dairy, I decide to go for the ordinary, unflavoured, unfiltered, unmediated, full-fat, plain variety. And I can't find it.

Perhaps I should retrace my steps and try to remember why I wanted yoghurt in the first place? Was it for pudding or salad?

If, by some failure of weekend programming, my family and I were to find ourselves at the supermarket together, my interior monologue on the merits and uses of various yoghurts would turn into a public debate that would inevitably end in one of those domestic compromises that leave each party feeling sour - and we end up leaving the shop with half a dozen different types and flavours of yoghurt in our trolley.

Without the interested parties present to debate their particular tastes, my nerve wavers. But I did not sink so low as to phone home on the mobile, as I see my fellow shoppers doing from time to time, and describe the display in front of me.

The whole point of the supermarket run is to shop quickly and efficiently and maybe even inexpensively under one roof.

The whole point of choice, on the other hand, is that it requires decision-making - a demanding and time-consuming process.

So the abundance of choice in our supermarkets - every year bigger, better, more - has transformed the business of stocking up on household staples into a day's work, involving detailed analysis of pros and cons and whys and wherefores.

The next item on my envelope is washing powder. The aisle is another expanse of different brands in different sizes and different packages and boxes. One declares itself to be "biological". What can it mean? Is it intended to sound healthy and natural?

The next box is equally proud of being "non-biological". I can have a soft pack. A cardboard box. A plastic container. A dispensing ball. A measuring cup. I could have a refill (what would I be refilling?). There are different flavours. I could, if I chose, walk around in lemon-scented jockey shorts, or sleep in pine-scented sheets. And how do I choose?

At this point I do what any rational person would, dazzled by infinite variety. I start loading the trolley at random. Then, dimly aware that I've departed from my crumpled list, I dump a couple of yoghurts (lo-fat banana flavour with honeycomb; Greek full fat with muesli) on the dog-food shelf. More choice for dogs.



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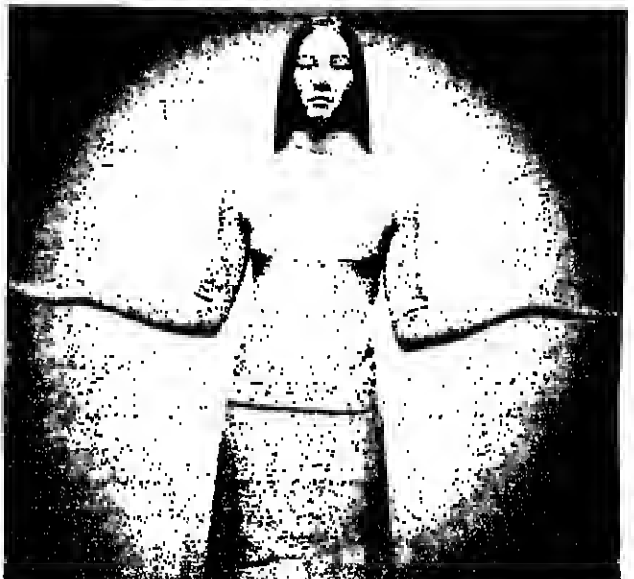
Have no fear: neon pink, turquoise and lapis lazuli blue are here. But are you ready for acid yellow? By Susannah Frankel



Lime shell top, £148; red linen trousers, £185; by Sportmax; at MaxMara, 32 Sloane Street, London SW1; and Matches, 35a South Park Road, London SW19 (enquiries 0171-287 3434)



Double-layer, neon-pink dress, £50, by Warehouse; branches at 19-21 Argyll Street, London W1; 30 King Street, Manchester; 14 Lands Lane, Leeds (enquiries 0171-278 3491)



Lemon top, £14.99, from Hennes (enquiries 0171-255 2031); aqua top, £27.99, by Morgan (0171-383 2888); lemon asymmetric skirt, to order, by Etro (0171-495 5767)



Orange linen drawstring dress, £85, by French Connection; 249 Regent Street, London W1; 16 Market Hill, Cambridge; 45 Princes Square, Glasgow; and stores nationwide (enquiries 0171-399 7200); purple cashmere cardigan, £148, by Jigsaw; 126-127 New Bond Street, London W1; 16 Pelham Street, Nottingham; 42 Grafton Street, Dublin; and stores nationwide (enquiries 0171-491 4484)

I've had it up to here with grey

There are certain received wisdoms: stripes on the horizontal should only ever be worn by the enviable thin; American Tan tights and puffball skirts are a crime of fashion of unprecedented proportions, and pink is likely to do nothing whatsoever for the average grey/white British complexion – in fact, it may be positively harmful.

You know something's afoot, however, when Helmut Lang – let's just call him Mr Minimal Monochrome – turns to colour. You know something's, well, plain insane when that colour is pink – not palest rose,

you understand, more like neon.

Things gather momentum when Tom Ford – a man who, until recently, has taken pride in the fact that he wears black and only black, morning, noon and night and whatever the weather – features equally vibrant pinks, alongside turquoise and blue, on the normally resolute, sombre Gucci catwalk. Put it this way: until now, for Ford, white has been a radical option. In terms of colour, this time round, his is the Almodovar of collections: hot and Mediterranean from start to finish.

But then, as Ford himself puts it, when asked to explain this rather radical about-turn: "I always try to think of myself as the customer. So,

what does she want? She certainly doesn't want grey. Her closet's full of it. She's read about it 20 million times. She's sick of it. She's lived through grey. She's gone through minimalism and conceptual fashion. So, what does she want now? She wants... pink dresses." Of course!

If the spring/summer collections are anything to go by – and the autumn/winter shows, kicking off this week in New York, seem only to add grist to the mill – the world, in fashion terms at least, is set to become a far more colourful place. Lang and Ford aren't the only designers to have come over all bright and breezy: everyone from Calvin Klein and Donna Karan to Christian Dior

and Clements Ribeiro has introduced a hefty dose of colour into their collections. Lang's and Ford's offerings are the most significant, however. Between them, they are almost singlehandedly responsible for informing the Great British High Street: where forthcoming trends are concerned, these are the world's two most influential designers.

So, it seems that, this time round, the customer really might want pink dresses. And blue ones. Even yellow ones, although this potentially most virulent of hues, it almost goes without saying, should be handled with even more care than the first. We can only be thankful that lime green isn't back on the fashion

agenda. Remember lime green?

Of course, each and every summer, fashion editors push colour as if their very existence depended on it – it makes great pictures, after all – then turn up at the next round of shows wearing black head to toe. This season, however, there's barely any black in the stores to be seen. Grey, meanwhile, is just so last season (and the season before that, and the one before that) it doesn't bear thinking about. For spring/summer colour – from palest aqua to brightest turquoise; from dusty lilac to purplish pink; from delicate primrose to acid yellow and from lapis lazuli to ice blue – takes centre stage.

For those still committed to more

neutral shades, bright isn't necessarily best: a very pale skin should avoid the strongest shades. Neither should they worry about mixing their colours: the truly brave (truly fashionable) among us should think nothing of combining orange with purple, say, or yellow with blue. Have courage in your convictions and don't even care.

And finally, there's always white to resort to which, more than any rainbow shade, is the new black. Fashion purists might do well to stick with this. They can always accessorise with colour rather than go the whole hog. There's many a tomato red lipstick or neon pink handbag out there to choose from after all.

NEXT WEEK

Is New York the new London? Can the commercial fashion capital ever compete with London as a centre for innovation and ideas? Full New York report, including Calvin Klein, Donna Karan, Marc Jacobs, TSE Cashmere and more

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Stylist: Holly Wood
Make-up and hair: Beverley Brooke using Shu Uemura
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Kinky sexual experiments were being shown on stage long before *Shopping and Fucking*. Marivaux played dangerous gender games in his 1744 play *La Dispute*. It's a natural for director Neil Bartlett. By Paul Taylor

Legends of the Fall

Did Adam have a navel? Just for decoration, of course, and for solidarity with his offspring. Or was it one of the meagre consolations of post-Edenic life that at least he didn't have any problems with smelly, wedged-in fluff? How, though, could you be the human race's Ur-navelgazer without a navel to gaze into? Tricky.

We have a powerful urge to try to imagine a primal, prelapsarian state, but as the above parody shows, the fun and difficulties of this activity arise from the fact that we only have postlapsarian methods and metaphors for engaging in it. Even imagination is a "fallen" phenomenon. In *Paradise Illustrated*, his acutely witty descantings on themes from *Paradise Lost*, D J Enright pined it down perfectly with this vignette: "It's unimaginable!" sighed Adam. "You're not obliged to imagine it," snapped the Landlord. "Yet."

People have gone to extraordinary lengths in the forlorn hope of artificially reproducing "original" conditions. There's the instance of the Pharaoh, cited by Herodotus, who caused some children to be reared in total silence in the barny belief that when they eventually spoke, it would be in the primal language of humanity. And tragically, in our century, there's the case of Genie, the Los Angeles teenage girl who spent her entire life locked up. Her still-preverbal plight had linguists salivating; through her, they thought, Chomsky's theories about language and the mind could be proved or disproved. Not so, and the poor girl became a shuttlecock in a contest between rival academics.

No non-fictional experiment has, however, displayed quite the kinkiness and exquisite cruelty of that dramatised by Pierre Marivaux in his 1744 play *The Dispute*. This compelling rarity is about to be revived by Neil Bartlett, artistic director of the Lyric, Hammersmith, using his own translation and in a welcome co-production between the Lyric and the RSC. The set-up in this frightening comedy is as follows: 18 years before the action commences, a researched dispute had arisen at the Prince's court over which of the sexes in the early days of mankind committed the first infidelity. To "settle" the matter, the Prince promptly ordered four babies to be reared in solitary confinement. Compared with them, married Miranda in Shakespeare's cogitate *Tempest* had a crammed social diary. And the young heir to the throne who is continually drugged and swept backwards and forwards from ragged isolation to glittering court in the political unrest of Calderon's masterpiece *Life Is A Dream* enjoyed, by comparison, a life crowded with incident and friendship.

The drama of what happens when Marivaux's young people are eventually released into each other's company is enclosed within a singularly nasty frame. Watching the proceedings unnoticed are the prince's son and Hermione, the woman he wishes to seduce. The outcome of the inset drama will inevitably affect their relationship for good or ill. What exactly,



A frightening comedy in a nasty frame: Neil Bartlett directs Marivaux's *The Dispute*

Geraint Lewis

though, are they observing? A re-enactment of Eden and the Fall, or - notwithstanding the calendar age of these couples - a kind of child pornography?

Neil Bartlett teams with fascinating ideas about the piece, which he likens, in its Rocco exquisiteness, to a Meissen figurine - its style in telling tension with the clinical brutality it confronts and analyses. It felt a bit incongruous to be talking to Bartlett, an urban gay man *par excellence*, in his bijou cottage digs in Stratford-upon-Avon, rather as though one had suddenly spotted Genet in a National Trust gift shop. He appears, however, to be relishing his temporary transposition and certainly co-productions such as this are just the kind of blood transfusion the RSC needs.

A Slovakian company brought an extraordinarily sexy version of *The Dispute* to the 1991 Edinburgh Festival, but the revival now used as a touchstone is Patrice Chereau's 1970s production which grimly shifted proceedings to a post-Sadeian, post-Freudian environment where the Nazi experiments in the death camps never seemed far away and where one of the young guinea pigs was reduced, to suicide.

Bartlett's staging sounds much subtler. Setting the play at an aristocratic country house weekend in the 1930s will enable him to get the best of both worlds.

In his view, what befalls the 18-year-old in the short course of the play is "an evolution that is like time-lapse photography. They start off being five, but actually behave as if they are three, and finish older than us". For Bartlett, the timescale of the play early incorporates an acceleration into the future. "It seems to start in the Rocco 18th century and whether it wants to or not, it winds up in a Sadeian wasteland". He is struck by how acutely the play anticipates later "findings". The comically naïve routines with a looking glass "are almost a canonical description of Freud's mirror-phase and its perils". Having a foot, so to speak, in two temporal camps, the production will strive to heighten the play's prophetic cultural ambivalence.

I suggested to Bartlett that theatre is a medium particularly suited to dramatising these doomed attempts to recreate origins, the bare stage a symbol of the *tabula rasa*, the slate wiped clean, a metaphor right under the actors' feet. He qualifies this

slightly by saying that in *The Dispute*, there's a strange doubleness in the setting. The stage has to represent both the abstract base I've described and the very specific location of a contrived wilderness in the grounds of a country estate. Hence, the corner of a building from the Charlottenberg Gardens in Berlin featuring in the set.

Those of us who feel that a more interesting question than "which sex committed the first infidelity?" would be "which sex first thought of such a mean, futile question?", will be relieved to learn that *The Dispute* is only the ostensible contention in Marivaux's play. What is most profoundly at issue, declares Bartlett, "are the two competing mythologies of childhood. Does every childhood inevitably re-enact the Fall? Or is evil the failure of parents?"

"In her book about Mary Bell, Gita Sereny slips in a shocking statement. She talks about 'the intrinsic goodness of the human being as born'. But what about Mary Bell's mother? She must also have been naturally good. So where does the chain end? That's the book's great silence."

The perverted ingenuity of the experimental set-up in *The Dispute* extends to the skin colour of the couple assigned to rear the children. Carise and Mesrou are black, the Prince reports, "so that their charges might be the more astonished when they see other people" - to maximise, in other words, their sense of disorientation on realising that their whiteness is not unique to them. At this point, the antennae of Bartlett, the creative historian of the theatrical culture, twitch. "What wouldn't we give to know," he muses, "if Carise and Mesrou were played by black actors at the original performance? And wouldn't it be fabulous to commission a play about the life of the two black performers in *The Dispute* after the curtain comes down?"

Frames-within-frames: a contrast between the power politics in the play and in the theatrical company. Somehow I fancy we won't have to wait many years for this intriguing hypothetical project. Most likely venue? The Lyric, Hammersmith. Most likely author? One Neil Bartlett.

The Dispute previews at The Other Place, Stratford from 24 Feb. (01789-256623) tours to Fosse and Brighton; Lyric Hammersmith from 15 Apr (0181-741 2311)

DEBUT: ALISON FISKE

The Time: 1965
The Place: the US
The part: Lucy Lockitt in *The Beggar's Opera*

THEATRE GROUP 20 was formed in 1965 by an American drama student called Gordon Taylor and Shivaun O'Casey. Sean O'Casey's daughter. It was based in a church hall in Warwick Avenue. The idea behind it was to hold graduates of the same drama centre training together as a company. It had an educational remit, which is how it got the necessary permits to tour the States. So while we - about half a dozen inexperienced non-singers in our early twenties -

rehearsed *The Beggar's Opera* and a triple bill of two one-act plays and a monologue, Gordon Taylor booked a 40-date tour of American universities which took us through practically every state in the Union.

In four months we must have travelled 20,000 miles. In an old Greyhound bus. We went as far north as Washington State and as far south as the Mexican border. Frank, the driver, was from the Bronx and stuck to his job - he never came to see the performances.

The moment we'd arrive in a campus, we'd unload the set and the costumes we needed, get in, do the show, then take it all down again. Exhaustion



quickly set in and there we were in this darkened coach, thundering through the changing landscape of North America, trying to recuperate before the next destination.

We were often billeted with members of campus faculties. One couple were greatly looking forward to *The Beggar's Opera* - he was an 18th-century theatre expert and she had perfect pitch. Their only comment was "very hairy". At Harvard we danced a farandole on a stage made from rostra with gaps in between. People missed entrances and the set fell down. There were unforgettable moments, such as when we saw Charlie Mingus bashing the lights out in a New York night-club because he was annoyed with the manager. As a way of seeing America, it was great. As a way to develop as an actor, I'm not so sure.

Six months later, after some considerable re-rehearsal and by great good fortune, we were back in New York to do an off-Broadway production of *The Beggar's Opera* and two plays by Harold Pinter. The Immigration Department raided us mid-performance because we were on the wrong visas. We had our fingerprints taken next day and were threatened with deportation if we didn't leave, which we did, that evening.

INTERVIEW BY DOMINIC CAVENTISH

Alison Fiske is in *Celastine* at Hampstead Theatre, London NW3 (0171-722 5301) part of *A Small Drop of Ink*, to 24 Feb

ON THE FRINGE

THE LOST CHILD ON TOUR ■ FOURPLAY LYRIC STUDIO

JUDGED BY its intentions alone, *The Lost Child* would be declared a must-see. The second in a trilogy of the same name by the David Glass Ensemble, it has grown out of the company's work with street children around the world. Thousands were shown *The Hansel Gretel Machine*, which explored instances of abandonment through a mine version of the Brothers Grimm fairy tale, and their own answering experiences have contributed to the textless sequel.

Glass and his team - four actors, two designers and composer Jonathan Cooper - have fashioned a black-and-white "series of dream pictures" which are as

redolent of Luis Buñuel as the acknowledged inspiration, Lewis Carroll. They are accompanied by a sound-track that bombards the ear with drum-rolled gunfire, sampled gurgles, mournful loops of piano and a legion of accidental-oriental effects. But the non-specificity of *The Lost Child* gives rise to unease and confusion: images of brutalised or vulnerable youngsters are put to a metaphorical use which, while never entirely clear, seems to put the loss of innocence that comes with adulthood on a par with the traumas children can suffer at the hands of adults.

The piece takes the form of a quest conducted in and around a small proscenium

theatre. A pregnant woman (Gretel) goes through a looking-glass in search of both her mirror-self and a man who beckoned her (Hansel). Her unborn baby is removed by a white-faced haldie with rabbit ears and a bandage-masked sidekick in a trench-coat and bowler hat. As creepy as the kiddycatcher from *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang*, this sinister duo tyrannise the children who live beneath the stage where they spend much time committing solvent abuse or blowing up polystyrene dolls, depending on how you look at it. You can't fault Glass's inventiveness - there are some striking coups de théâtre with masks and fairy-lights - but, repeated

in combinations that defy decoding, they leave the audience stranded. So much emphasis is placed on structure that it ends up looking hollow.

In Sergi Belbel's interestingly flawed anti-farce *Fourplay*, directed by Hans-Peter Kellner, an elaborate formalism is deployed to point up an inner emptiness.

In 38 brief, cut-up scenes, punctuated by cheesy incidental music, we are teased about what goes on when a sexless married couple bring two friends (male and female) together, with the bizarre motive of inaugurating their new bed. How much "action" takes place is thrown into question when suggestive

scenes are repeated with more context: what might have been a lesbian embrace proves to be a slip-up on a pool of vomit; the smell of sex becomes the odour of tobacco puffed by Belbel's miserable quartet. The Catalan playwright has been compared with Pedro Almodóvar, but the neurosis on display here is skin-deep, used to make points about consumerism and entertainment that would have been better served with less contrivance.

DOMINIC CAVENTISH

The Lost Child: Birmingham Mac, Fri/Sat, (0121-440-3838) then tours; *Fourplay*, Lyric Hammersmith (0181-741 8701) to 20 Feb

Jam on, jam on

REVIEW

TOAST
ROYAL COURT
LONDON

CASTING AROUND for a title for his delightfully funny play set in a mass production bakery in Hull in the Seventies, Richard Bean has clearly been up against it. Carla Lane had already used up *Bread*. Watching Richard Wilson's beautifully acted and observed production, I kept wondering why *Dough* or *The Bread Line* had been ruled out. After all, the factory on which Bean trains his knowing lens is ailing, its weaknesses set to be exposed when a thriving Bradford sister-outfit suffers a cock-up one night and Hull has to bake enough bread for two cities. If the ultimatum can't be met, it looks like the place will be shut down. And between the men and success stand a jammed oven and a double-dealing colleague.

As Jerome K Jerome rightly asserted, there is nothing quite so restful as watching other people at toil and audiences like to enter alien territories whose tribal details are wonderfully exotic on stage, if not in life. In this crudely teabag-stained canteen, you're yanked right into the needling camaraderie, the power-plays and mutual survival techniques of this hard-labouring world. Wilson establishes the divergencies with a care that attends to their different ways of smoking a cigarette.

In a superb ensemble, Sam Kelly is hilarious and touching as beaming fifty-something Cecil, whose hen-pecked sex-starvation is betrayed in the almost magnetised prurience with which he tracks his workmates' love lives. Bean has had the inspired idea of introducing a new recruit in the shape of an impostor: a posh, tweedy weirdo from the local asylum, played with perfectly barmy self-preoccupation by Christopher Campbell. He fondly imagines that he's a messenger from beyond the grave and corners each of the men in turn. The joke is that nobody is really deceived. That comedy takes a poignant turn when fellow feeling is shown for this inadequate by Mark Williams's tough, unsmiling Blakey. Having spent six years in prison, he knows a fair bit about confinement and despair. Ewan Hooper, too, is immensely moving as "Nellie", the stoical, trembly old workhorse who, like the ovens he's enslaved to, would seize up and die if momentarily switched off.

The production lovingly re-evokes the decade that style forgot. I wince to admit that the clothes worn by Matthew Dunster's excellent Peter (straining cheesecloth, retina-abusing fairs) is the kind of outfit your humble reviewer wore when basking on the lawns of Balliol with his now opposite number at *The Daily Telegraph*.

O tempora, O mores, O y veh. PAUL TAYLOR
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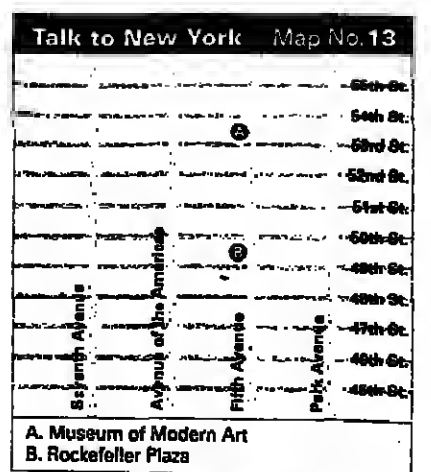
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THE INDEPENDENT

No one asks 'what happened to you?'

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YVONNE WAFT WORKS FOR JAMES RYE, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF MARKETING FOR SCOPE, THE CHARITY FOR PEOPLE WITH CEREBRAL PALSY

I became a wheelchair user at 19, and noticed how people suddenly treated me like a child. As a disabled woman in society I don't often feel understood, but working here means that I don't need to explain myself.

I'm not seen as a tragic, helpless cripple and no one asks "Oh dear, what happened to you?"

I've been refused jobs in the past for various spurious reasons. I would apply for a job as a telephoneist, for example, have a three-minute interview and then be told that the job was going to someone more "experienced". For a while I worked for the Corporation of London, as secretary in the access officer for people with disabilities. However, outside my department there were some old-fashioned views, so some people the fact that I was disabled and female put me down among the vermin.

The staff here are very friendly, relaxed and equality minded, partly because they've done disability awareness courses. As PA to the assistant director of Scope I've got a reasonably elevated position, and it's nice not to be in a situation where I am looked down on as a disabled person who's lucky to have got herself a job at all.

When Glenn Hoddle made his statement about the disabled, the phones at Scope started buzzing with people calling us for comment. It was quite exciting because it gave us an opportunity to put across the fact that Scope is working at challenging prejudices like this on a daily basis. I was pleased that we were now able to talk about it. There are so many people with disabilities who play sport, particularly kids, that it's all the more inappropriate for a prominent sportsman to make a comment like that. I was impressed by how on the ball Tony Blair was; it's quite rare for a prime minister to take a stand like that.

When I first heard Hoddle's statement, the first thought I had was "what a silly sod". But I wasn't really shocked, because I had studied the fears and prejudices about disability that you can detect in the undercurrent of popular opinion as part of my degree in psychology, which I completed last year. People often ask what you have done to deserve it and disability is often associated with disfigurement, ugliness and badness - prime examples being *The Phantom of the Opera*, Freddie Kruger, Captain Hook and Richard III. But assuming that disability is a punishment implies that



When Yvonne Waft heard Glenn Hoddle's remarks about disability she was not shocked because they reflect attitudes she has studied

Andrew Buurman

it must be an entirely bad experience, which in my opinion is quite untrue. I've got a first-class degree and a job, I drive around, I go swimming, and I got married last year. My husband, however, was outraged by Hoddle's remarks. I guess he felt defensive and protective over me. When people argue that Hoddle should have freedom of speech I wonder whether they would feel the same way had he claimed that black people deserved slavery, or Jews the Holocaust. I

wonder what Hoddle thinks he did in his past life to deserve the punishment he's receiving now?

A lot of people working at secretarial level here have degrees; I don't know whether it's specific to Scope or is in tune with society in general. However most of my colleagues are happy to be here, largely because working for a charity is so rewarding. My job includes a lot of telephone work and I also liaise with the advertising agency, particularly about product placement, which is

very important for us. For example, you will notice there's a Scope charity box on the bar in EastEnders. Before working here I knew very little about Scope, except for the fact that it used to be called the Spastics Society. But I subscribed to *Disability Now*, which turned out to be edited by one of my bosses here. Ironically, I have become a bit of a regular fixture in the magazine myself, especially on the subject of discrimination.

I have a relaxed relationship with

James; he is very easy-going and doesn't make it difficult for me to do the things I want to do, and he often asks my opinion.

Sometimes I wonder whether I am coping out by working for a charity for the disabled. But I can also see the potential for moving upwards within this environment, getting increasingly involved in research and the politics of disability. I'm terribly turned on by ideas and would like to do a PhD or move into clinical psychology training. I

think people often don't understand me because I tend to think academically, particularly on the subject of disability. As a result I sometimes get frustrated with people in the real world. But academics earn little, my husband's pay as a primary school teacher is basic and I've yet to pay off a student loan, so I think I'll stay here for a while; besides, I enjoy the sense of achievement that comes from indirectly helping people.

INTERVIEW BY
KATIE SAMPSON

He came in a loincloth to brighten my birthday

SO WHAT'S the worst day of the year to be a temp? Your birthday. What's worse than that? When your birthday is the day after Valentine's and no one sends you a card for either. When it also happens that your birthday is a Monday, you're scraping dangerously close to the nether regions of the barrel. Except when you spend the day filing paid bills in the basement of a huge, faceless service-provider. I'll say this now: I hate filing. It's one of those things that, in normal jobs, I force myself to do first thing every morning for five minutes so that I don't have to spend time dreading it. I have been reduced to tears by the task. The combination of

mundanity, repetition and paper cuts is enough to make the toughest soul crumble. I have fantasies of hardened policemen, who have presided without a flicker over murdered children, rape victims and motorway pile-ups, sobbing as they pull out the same cardboard wallet for the seventh time the time for paperwork comes.

I know dentists are supposed to have the highest suicide rate in the country, but I'm sure that this is because no one has ever bothered to check the rates among filing clerks. This particular job has all the exquisite boredom of waiting for a Virgin train, for every piece of paper is the same as the last

save for the figures and the name at the top. Sometimes, a curious filing clerk can find interest from reading as they file, building up pictures of lives and events that, though they have been reduced in the final stage to dusty, dog-eared official documents, were once moments of great drama to the participants. Not here. Copies of bills that have been paid give no indication of the grief that setting them will have entailed. The wives who found out about their husbands' gambling when they received a red bill, the shared households that split under the pressure of settling individual responsibility, the single mums going without



THE TEMP

food to make sure the kids are covered are all reduced to a single piece of paper stamped, with the date of settlement.

Come lunchtime, I decide to take a break even though it means forgoing the extra £4.25. Some birthday. So I head to the

nearest greasy spoon for beans on toast and a Mars bar. Buy a magazine and read an interview with one of those glamorously successful women who has never had an urge to eat five Mars bars in succession and wash them down with a tin of Coke. Eat my beans as she confesses that she's about to turn 30. "I feel fine about it," she says. "You have to learn to be happy about your stage in life, or life will always be too much for you. And anyway," she continues, "I love birthdays. I always take the day off, and spend it being pampered. I have a massage, a steam bath and a facial, and give the time over to reflecting on where I am, what I have

achieved in the past year and what I intend to achieve in the coming one. I find it very useful to take the time out and check that I'm still on track."

Oh, well, I think, maybe that's what I ought to be doing. Let's see. I've had 28 jobs, one holiday, a zillion cigarettes, had my shoes reheelled twice, and discovered that none of my friends cares that it's my birthday. What do I want for the coming year? To buy new shoes. To have something to say about myself at parties that doesn't make people glaze over and go in search of the drinks. To get a job: a real one, with payed holidays, sick leave, a desk of my own, colleagues who knew it was my

birthday. Lord, how I'd love that. When I can't spin my stewed tea out any longer, I wander through the streets to the grim concrete edifice that is Electrical Holdings plc. In the basement, there's some giggling and staring going on when I walk in. I pick up another sheet of paper and start sorting them alphabetically, when Brenda comes over. "Is it your birthday or something?" she says. I brighten instantly. Someone cares after all. "Yes. How did you know?" They all burst out laughing. "You had a singing telegram while you were out," she says. "Tarzanagram, he was, in a loincloth. Said to tell you he'd be back at five o'clock."

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TELEVISION REVIEW

ART is like a weed: leave it to grow by itself and, before you know it, it's taking over the whole garden. Last night's *Close Up* (BBC2) on collectors of modern art featured some people whose lives had been taken over by art, who had allowed Gilbert and George's bold and minimalist style of painting to take over their lives. But these overgrown patches were nothing compared with the jungles we entered in *Journeys into the Outside* with Jarvis Cocker (C4). As an art student at St Martin's, Cocker became dismayed by what he saw as the divorce between art and life, and got interested in the notion of "outsider art" - art produced beyond the confines of the art-world by people erecting because they needed to, not because they had been taught to. He wrote a dissertation on the subject, which got the second lowest mark in his year.

Last night's programme, the first of three, followed Cocker to France, where there is a tradition of outsider art on a monumental scale. The Rochers, Scitels, consist of 300 boxes and figures carved out of the rocks on the seashore (St Martin's 100 years ago by a retired priest, Bank, looked justly-earned, buildings, monumental and grand). Cocker found heads struggling out of the rock and, upon being asked, they said: "I'm not here, I'm not here, I'm not here." The programme was a bit of a mess, but it was a necessary piece for the enthusiast Cocker brought to the subject. As a whole, the film was an eloquent argument in favour of weeds - which may not be pretty, but are chock full of life.

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- 6.00** *Shakespeare* (BBC2). **7.00** *News* (T) (1152).
- 8.00** *City* (T) (1152). **8.15** *The News* (T) (1152). **8.30** *News* (T) (1152). **8.45** *News* (T) (1152). **9.00** *News* (T) (1152). **9.15** *News* (T) (1152). **9.30** *News* (T) (1152). **9.45** *News* (T) (1152). **10.00** *News* (T) (1152). **10.15** *News* (T) (1152). **10.30** *News* (T) (1152). **10.45** *News* (T) (1152). **11.00** *News* (T) (1152). **11.15** *News* (T) (1152). **11.30** *News* (T) (1152). **11.45** *News* (T) (1152). **12.00** *News* (T) (1152). **12.15** *News* (T) (1152). **12.30** *News* (T) (1152). **12.45** *News* (T) (1152). **1.00** *News* (T) (1152). **1.15** *News* (T) (1152). **1.30** *News* (T) (1152). **1.45** *News* (T) (1152). **2.00** *News* (T) (1152). **2.15** *News* (T) (1152). **2.30** *News* (T) (1152). **2.45** *News* (T) (1152). **3.00** *News* (T) (1152). **3.15** *News* (T) (1152). **3.30** *News* (T) (1152). **3.45** *News* (T) (1152). **4.00** *News* (T) (1152). **4.15** *News* (T) (1152). **4.30** *News* (T) (1152). 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